

A New Centre for Civic Engagement in Architecture

by

Sahana Dharmaraj BAS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Architecture (M.Arch)

**The Faculty of Graduate Studies
Laurentian University
Sudbury, Ontario, Canada**

© Sahana Dharmaraj, 2019

THESIS DEFENCE COMMITTEE/COMITÉ DE SOUTENANCE DE THÈSE
Laurentian University/Université Laurentienne
Faculty of Graduate Studies/Faculté des études supérieures

Title of Thesis Titre de la thèse	A New Centre for Civic Engagement in Architecture	
Name of Candidate Nom du candidat	Dharmaraj, Sahana	
Degree Diplôme	Master of	
Department/Program Département/Programme	Architecture	Date of Defence Date de la soutenance April 09, 2019

APPROVED/APPROUVÉ

Thesis Examiners/Examineurs de thèse:

Mark Baechler
(Thesis Advisor / Directeur(trice) de thèse)

Amber Baechler
(Thesis Second Reader / Directeur(trice) de thèse deuxième)

Ms Janna Levitt
(External Examiner/Examineur(trice) externe)

Approved for the Faculty of Graduate Studies
Approuvé pour la Faculté des études supérieures
Dr. David Lesbarrères
Monsieur David Lesbarrères
Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Doyen, Faculté des études supérieures

ACCESSIBILITY CLAUSE AND PERMISSION TO USE

I, **Sahana Dharmaraj**, hereby grant to Laurentian University and/or its agents the non-exclusive license to archive and make accessible my thesis, dissertation, or project report in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or for the duration of my copyright ownership. I retain all other ownership rights to the copyright of the thesis, dissertation or project report. I also reserve the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis, dissertation, or project report. I further agree that permission for copying of this thesis in any manner, in whole or in part, for scholarly purposes may be granted by the professor or professors who supervised my thesis work or, in their absence, by the Head of the Department in which my thesis work was done. It is understood that any copying or publication or use of this thesis or parts thereof for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission. It is also understood that this copy is being made available in this form by the authority of the copyright owner solely for the purpose of private study and research and may not be copied or reproduced except as permitted by the copyright laws without written authority from the copyright owner.

a new centre for civic engagement in architecture

by: Sahana Dharmaraj BAS

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to the numerous individuals who have shaped and supported this thesis. Firstly, I would like to express the warmest gratitude to my thesis advisor, Mark Baechler. Your unwavering belief in this thesis is what pushed me, every day, to challenge what is understood of public engagement in architecture; your critical advice and insightful feedback is what allowed me to pursue the strengthening of my argument to achieve its clarity and potency. To my second reader, Amber Baechler, I wish to express my sincerest thanks for your expertise on the topic of architecture museums and the discourse surrounding the exhibition of architecture. To both of you, I am humbled to have been able to take part in the lively and charged conversations on the communication of architecture that we so often had during the course of this thesis. Your contributions were invaluable, and I dedicate this thesis to you.

I would also like to acknowledge the faculty and staff at the McEwen School of Architecture, who have significantly impacted the way I perceive the discipline of architecture. Thank you for your continued passion and dedication to changing pedagogical practices. You are paving the way in creating committed and compassionate architects. To my fellow charter class members, what a six years it has been. Few words can adequately describe our experience together, but one does come to mind: perseverance. I am irrevocably grateful for the atmosphere of positive reinforcement made possible by every one of you along the years. To Jenna Lamb and Shannon McMillan, my most heartfelt thanks belong to you. Your resolute support, constant friendship and all the laughs we shared were irreplaceable. To Braeden Martel, the deepest gratitude for your kindness and for your light. I would also like to express my appreciation for the endless encouragement provided by Justine Christensen, Brittany Danishevsky, Clarissa Costa, Allison Walters, Stefanie Kennedy, Rachel Duda, Shannon Feder, Colin Busch, Anastasia Renaud, Mackenzie Parr, Denis Lemieux and Charlotte Leck.

To Preveena and John, your boundless care, comfort and guidance were invaluable throughout my education. And, finally, to my parents: I would not circle thrice the world—I would circle *you* three times. Without your unconditional love and selflessness, I could not be where I am today.

Table of Contents

Abstract	vi
Acknowledgements	ix
List of Figures	xii
Introduction	5
Part I : The Architecture Centre	
Historical Context	17
The Architecture Centre	23
“The Institution”	25
“The Centre”	27
“The Hub”	29
“The Temporary” & “The Digital”	31
Conclusions	33
Part II : Design Proposal: The North York Centre for Architecture	
Siting the Centre	39
Defining a Public Program(ming)	42 45
The Design	63
Communication Strategy	79
Drawings & 1:100 Model	87
Epilogue	111
Bibliography	117

List of Figures

Figure 1p 1-2

Miami Center for Architecture & Design
Miami Center for Architecture & Design. n.d. Photograph. Retrieved from https://onthegrid.city/miami/downtown-miami/miami-center-for-architecture-and-design

Figure 2p 5

Sky of cranes in downtown Toronto
Landau, Jack. “The Land of Cranes and Fog.” *Flickr*. March 7, 2013. Photograph. Retrieved from https://www.flickr.com/photos/jacklandau/8537275729/

Figure 3p 6

Comic from article “How to Rebuild Architecture”
Schrauwen, Olivier. Untitled. December 15, 2015. Comic. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/16/opinion/how-to-rebuild-architecture.html

Figure 4p 9

AIA New York Center for Architecture
Berman, Andrew. Center for Architecture. 2003. Photograph. Retrieved from http://andrewbermanarchitect.com/projects/center_for_architecture5

Figure 5p 12

Bruce Mau Design, “Know Canada” campaign.
Mau, Bruce. “Know Canada.” April 2012. Photograph. Retrieved from http://www.brucemaudesign.com/work/know-canada

Figure 6p 13-14

Construction and cranes in downtown Toronto
Smith, Matthew. “Going Up.” Photograph. *Flickr*. May 25, 2013. Retrieved from https://www.flickr.com/photos/matthewsmith-photo/8880210617/

Figure 7p 17

Engraving of Soane’s Model Room (c. 1835)
Hopkins, Owen. “Engraving of Soane’s Model Room.” Scan of Engraving. *Apollo Magazine*. June 17, 2014. Retrieved from http://www.apollo-magazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06Engraving-of-Soanes-Model-Room-c.1835.jpg

Figure 8p 19

The Netherlands Architecture Institute
Linders, Jannes. “Het Nederlands Architectuurinstituut bij de oplevering in 1993.” Photograph. *Het Nieuwe Instituut*. n.d. Retrieved from https://hetnieuweinstituut.nl/het-gebouw

Figure 9p 20

The Outlook Tower
“Patrick Geddes, Camera Obscura, Outlook Tower, Edinburgh.” Digital Image. November 24, 2009. Retrieved from http://viven-dodiscimus.blogspot.com/2009/11/patrick-geddes-camera-obsu-cra-outlook.html

Figure 10p 21

Infobox at Postdamer Platz
“InfoBox Berlin City Model.” Photograph. *Pinterest*. n.d. Retrieved from https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/404831453982717767/?lp=true

Figure 11p 22

Postdamer Platz, before and after
“No Man’s Land.” Photograph. *Tripadvisor*. n.d. Retrieved from https://www.tripadvisor.se/LocationPhotoDirectLink-g187323-d190537-i91136549-Potsdamer_Platz-Berlin.html&prev=search; Reuters. “Der Leipziger und der Potsdamer Platz in Berlin aus der Vogelperspektive.” Photograph. Der Tagesspiegel. n.d. Retrieved from https://www.tagesspiegel.de/berlin/potsdamer-platz-das-kalte-herz-von-berlin/19315374.html

Figure 12p 24

The AIANY’s Center for Architecture
“The AIANY’s Center for Architecture in Manhattan.” Photograph. *Archpaper*. July 15, 2015. Retrieved from https://archpaper.com/2015/07/letter-editor-meet-street/

Figure 13p 25

Large lawn of the Canadian Centre for Architecture.
“Centre Canadien d’Architecture (CCA).” Photograph. *Québec-Original*. n.d. Retrieved from https://www.quebecoriginal.com/fr/fiche/quoi-faire/visites-et-patrimoine/musees-et-sites-historiques/centre-canadien-darchitecture-cca-1170936?fbclid=I-wAR15Gs3YPse1BMjkawxjb0RHH_uwOA08XhH8xKFuOu5x0Kt-fUDG7QAJaVBQ

Figure 14p 25

Canadian Centre for Architecture “Imperfect Health”
“Imperfect Health: The Medicalization of Architecture. Installation view, 2011” Photograph. *CCA*. n.d. Retrieved from https://www.cca.qc.ca/en/events/3178/imperfect-health-the-medical-ization-of-architecture

Figure 15p 28

Chicago Architecture Center front facade
Allix Rogers, Eric. “Chicago Architecture Center.” Photograph. *Curbed*. n.d. Retrieved from https://chicago.curbed.com/2018/8/31/17805292/chicago-architecture-center-open-public

Figure 16p 28

Chicago Architecture Center Skyscraper Exhibit
By author. “CAC Skyscraper Exhibition.” Photograph. March 2018.

Figure 17p 29

ARCAM in Amsterdam
“Architecture Center, Offices, Exhibition pace, Educational Space.” Photograph. René van Zuuk BV. n.d. Retrieved from https://www.renevanzuuk.nl/arcam-2/

Figure 18

p 29

ARCAM Exhibition “Farming the City”

“Farming the City.” Photograph. *Studio Knox*. n.d. Retrieved from <http://studioknox.se/2011/exhibition-environment/farming-the-city/>

Figure 19

p 32

BMW Guggenheim Lab, Berlin

Richters, Christian. “BMW Guggenheim Lab.” Photograph. *BMW Guggenheim Lab*. n.d. Retrieved from http://cdn.bmwguggenheimlab.org/press/2012/Full%20Press%20Kit_EN_Final.pdf

Figure 20

p 32

ShapeMyCity.com

“About Progressive City.” Digital Image. *Planners Network*. n.d. Retrieved from <https://www.plannersnetwork.org/progressive-city-online-magazine/about-d1/>

Figure 21

p 34

Center for Urban Pedagogy Workshop

“Center for Urban Pedagogy Workshop at SFai.” Photograph. *Design Corps of Santa Fe*. n.d. Retrieved from <https://design-corps.org/corps-community-center-urban-pedagogy-workshop-sfai/>

Figure 22

p 35-36

The Center for Architecture & Design in Seattle.

“The Center for Architecture & Design in Seattle.” Photograph. SSF. n.d. Retrieved from <https://ssfengineers.com/design-perspectives-a-center-for-design-thats-fitting-for-a-design-city/>

Figure 23

p 39

Aerial View towards Lake Ontario

Meslin, Gil. “North York Centre.” Photograph. November, 2017. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/g_meslin/status/926115143599230976?lang=en

Figure 24

p 40

Yonge-University line extension

“The York area seeks to extend the Yonge/Finch subway line.” Digital Image. n.d. Retrieved from <https://www.wenba.ca/article/4389>

Figure 25

p 41

North York Centre 1990 vs 2016

Dunlop, Alan. “North York.” Photograph. *Toronto Public Library*. 1990. Retrieved from https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/detail.jsp?Entt=RDMDCTSPA_0106979F&R=DC-TSPA_0106979F&searchPageType=vrl; “North York Satellite View.” Digital Image. 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.google.ca/maps/place/North+York,+Toronto,+ON/@43.7193408,-79.4565413,363m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x882b322ec4918c75:0xfb330d877ab-f7e3d!8m2!3d43.7615377!4d-79.4110794>

Figure 26

p 42

Existing organizations in North York and Toronto

By author. “Existing Groups and Organizations” Digital Graphic. 2019.

Figure 27

p 43

Grand opening of North York Central Library

Griffin, Doug. “Stairway to Knowledge.” Photograph. *Toronto Public Library*. 1987. Retrieved from https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/detail.jsp?Entt=RDMDCTSPA_0107068F&R=DC-TSPA_0107068F&searchPageType=vrl

Figure 28

p 44

Venues for conversations on architecture

By author. “Venues for Grassroots Groups and Organizations in Toronto” Digital Graphic. 2019; “Google Map View.” Digital Image. 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.google.ca/maps/place/North+York,+Toronto,+ON/@43.7193408,-79.4565413,363m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x882b322ec4918c75:0xfb330d877ab-f7e3d!8m2!3d43.7615377!4d-79.4110794>

Figure 29

p 46

Compiled list of programming

“Center for Urban Pedagogy Workshop at SFai.” Photograph. Design Corps of Santa Fe. n.d. Retrieved from <https://design-corps.org/corps-community-center-urban-pedagogy-workshop-sfai/>

Figure 30

p 47

ARCAM exhibition space

Rinders, Berbe. “ARCAM Exhibition Space.” Photograph. Retrieved from <https://www.arcam.nl/en/over-ons/>

Figure 31

p 47

CUP lecture

Ignacio, Alex. “Design for Social Impact - Center for Urban Pedagogy Collaboration.” Photograph. Retrieved from <https://design-corps.org/center-urban-pedagogy-collaboration-design-corps-santa-fe-dreamers-project-sfai/>

Figure 32

p 47

Conference at The Lighthouse in Scotland

“GDFS Live 2–day Project.” Photograph. Retrieved from <http://www.ostreet.co.uk/gdfs-report/>

Figure 33

p 47

Pop Can Crit symposium

KTCHN Photography. “Marketing and Promotion of Architecture in Canada.” Photograph. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/pg/PopCanCrit/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1569614109813044

Figure 34

p 47

Rotterdam architecture film festival

Van den Breemer, Boudewijn. “The 7th A.F.F.R., ‘The City as Time Machine’.” Photograph. 2013. Retrieved from <http://www.uncubemagazine.com/blog/11026075>

Figure 35

p 47

CUP Benefit 2018

Center for Urban Pedagogy. “1638_IMF_5992.” Photograph. 2018. Retrieved from https://www.flickr.com/photos/cup_photos/44526139224/

Figure 36	p 48	Competition display at the CAC Courier, Michael. “Between States—50 Designers Transform Chicago’s Neighborhoods.” Photograph. Retrieved from http://www.architecture.org/exhibits/exhibit/between-states50-designers-transform-chicagos-neighborhoods/
Figure 37	p 48	Youth programming at the Seattle Center for Architecture “For Your Eyes Only: Secret Bases.” Photograph. Retrieved from https://seattlearchitecture.strangertickets.com/events/58486919/for-your-eyes-only-secret-bases
Figure 38	p 48	Library at the NAi Musterd, Pieter. “Library NAi.” Photograph. October 27, 2012 Retrieved from https://www.flickr.com/photos/piet_musterd/8132342032
Figure 39	p 48	CCA bookstore “Canadian Centre for Architecture Bookstore.” Photograph. Retrieved from https://www.cca.qc.ca/en/visit
Figure 40	p 48	Workshop at the Centre for Urban Pedagogy Center for Urban Pedagogy. “EDT: What is Zoning.” Photograph. Retrieved from https://www.flickr.com/photos/cup_photos/10861491633/in/album-72157625533182745/
Figure 41	p 48	Walking tour, Winnipeg Vun, Zephyra. “Design Quarter Winnipeg Launch - Walking tour around Winnipeg’s Exchange District.” Photograph. Retrieved from https://www.designquarterwinnipeg.ca/portage-main
Figure 42	p 49	Cities of Rapid Growth event poster By author. “Cities of Rapid Growth Event Poster for the NYCA.” Digital Graphic. 2019.
Figure 43	p 49	Fall Film Series event poster By author. “Fall Film Series Event Poster for the NYCA.” Digital Graphic. 2019.
Figure 44	p 49	Collaborative Workshop event poster By author. “Collaborative Workshop Event Poster for NYCA.” Digital Graphic. 2019.
Figure 45	p 49	Exhibition event poster By author. “Collaborative Workshop Event Poster for NYCA.” Digital Graphic. 2019.
Figure 46	p 50	Youth Programming event poster By author. “A Cabin for Your Backyard Event Poster for NYCA.” Digital Graphic. 2019.
Figure 47	p 50	Zine Publication event poster By author. “Offshoot Vol 1 No 4 Zine Launch Event Poster for NYCA.” Digital Graphic. 2019.
Figure 48	p 50	Gala event poster By author. “The Centre for Civic Engagement in Architecture Gala Event Poster for NYCA.” Digital Graphic. 2019.
Figure 49	p 50	Walking Tour event poster By author. “Walking Tour Event Poster for NYCA.” Digital Graphic. 2019.
Figure 50	p 51	List of possible audiences attending events By author. “Who Will be Attending?” Digital Graphic. 2019.
Figure 51	p 51-52	Event profiles By author. “Event Profiles.” Digital Graphic. 2019.
Figure 52	p 53-53	Event profiles continued, 1 By author. “Event Profiles continued, 1.” Digital Graphic. 2019.
Figure 53	p 55-56	Event profiles continued, 2 By author. “Event Profiles continued, 2.” Digital Graphic. 2019.
Figure 54	p 57-58	Connections between programming By author. “Connections between Programming.” Digital Graphic. 2019.
Figure 55	p 59	Architectural Program Spaces By author. “Architectural Program Spaces.” Digital Graphic. 2019.
Figure 56	p 60	Early adjacency diagram By author. “Early Adjacency Diagram.” Digital Graphic. 2019.
Figure 57	p 61	Program profiles By author. “Program Profiles.” Digital Graphic. 2019.
Figure 58	p 62	Early adjacency diagram By author. “Early adjacency diagram.” Digital Graphic. 2019.

Figure 59	p 63	Site isometric By author. “Site Isometric.” Digital Graphic. 2019.
Figure 60	p 65-66	Thesis object from above By author. “Thesis Object From Above.” Photograph. 2019.
Figure 61	p 67	Collage of Thesis Object Uses By author. “Thesis Object From Above.” Photographs. 2019.
Figure 62	p 68	Sketchbook pages 1 By author. “Sketchbook Pages 1.” Scan. 2019.
Figure 63	p 69-70	Existing condition of Yonge & Empress NE corner By author. “Existing condition of Yonge & Empress NE Corner.” Photograph. 2019.
Figure 64	p 71	Existing condition of Yonge & Empress SE corner By author. “Existing condition of Yonge & Empress SE Corner.” Photograph. 2019.
Figure 65	p 71	Existing condition of Yonge & Empress NW corner By author. “Existing condition of Yonge & Empress NW Corner.” Photograph. 2019.
Figure 66	p 71	Existing condition of Yonge & Empress SW corner By author. “Existing condition of Yonge & Empress SW Corner.” Photograph. 2019.
Figure 67	p 72	North York Hydro building, 1929 “North York Hydro commission’s new building. The staff has moved into the new home of the North York Hydro Commission at 5151 Yonge St.; Willowdale; built at a cost of \$20;000.” Photograph. Retrieved from https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/detail.jsp?Entt=RDMDc-TSPA_0107033F&R=DC-TSPA_0107033F
Figure 68	p 72	North York Hydro building, 1948 Salmon, James Victor. “North York Hydro commission’s new building. The staff has moved into the new home of the North York Hydro Commission at 5151 Yonge St.; Willowdale; built at a cost of \$20;000.” Photograph. Dec 21 1957. Retrieved from https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/detail.jsp?Entt=RDM-DC-PICTURES-R-6394&R=DC-PICTURES-R-6394
Figure 69	p 73	Sketchbook pages 2 By author. “Sketchbook Pages 2.” Photograph. 2019.

Figure 70	p 73	Sketchbook pages 3 By author. “Sketchbook Pages 3.” Photograph. 2019.
Figure 71	p 74	Sketchbook pages 4 By author. “Sketchbook Pages 4.” Photograph. 2019.
Figure 72	p 74	Sketchbook pages 5 By author. “Sketchbook Pages 5.” Photograph. 2019.
Figure 73	p 75	Collage of maquette iterations By author. “Collage of Maquette Iterations.” Photograph. 2019.
Figure 74	p 77	West elevation perspective, cropped By author. “West Elevation Perspective, Cropped.” Photograph. 2019.
Figure 75	p 78	View from entrance court into meeting room By author. “View from Entrance Court into Meeting Room.” Photograph. 2019.
Figure 76	p 79	Pentagram’s New York office Bolt, Laura. “Pentagram’s 40+ Year Spirit of Collaboration Reigns in Their NYC Studio.” Photograph. May 5 2015. Retrieved from https://www.glassdoor.co.in/Photos/Pentagram-Design-Of-fice-Photos-E9947.htm
Figure 77	p 81	People interacting with pamphlets at CUP Benefit Center for Urban Pedagogy. “1596_DSC03556.” Photograph. October 3 2018. Retrieved from https://www.flickr.com/photos/cup_photos/44337505535/
Figure 78	p 82	People interacting with pamphlets in a workshop Center for Urban Pedagogy. “Launch and Distribution Event for Making Policy Public Project How Can I Improve My Park?” Photograph. July 24 2014. Retrieved from http://www.drawing-center.org/en/drawingcenter/5/exhibitions/9/upcoming/2003/winter-term/
Figure 79	p 82	What Is Zoning? illustrated guidebook Center for Urban Pedagogy. “What Is Zoning? Illustrated Guidebook.” Digital Image. Retrieved from http://cup.linkedbyair.net/NewsAndEvents/CUPReceives50Books50CoversAward
Figure 80	p 83	Too Tall? Exhibit, Harbourfront Architecture Gallery Baechler, Amber. Too Tall? Exhibit at the Harbourfront Architecture Gallery” Photograph. 2011.

Figure 81

p 85-86

Lecture at Center for Urban Pedagogy 2

Ignacio, Alex. “Design for Social Impact - Center for Urban Pedagogy Collaboration.” Photograph. Retrieved from <https://design-corps.org/center-urban-pedagogy-collaboration-design-corps-santa-fe-dreamers-project-sfai/>

Figure 82

p 89-90

Site Plan 1:4000

By author. “Site Plan 1:4000.”Digital Graphic. 2019.

Figure 83

p 91-92

Site Isometric 1:1000

By author. “Site Isometric 1:1000.”Digital Graphic. 2019.

Figure 84

p 93-94

Ground Floor Plan 1:200

By author. “Ground Floor Plan 1:200.”Digital Graphic. 2019.

Figure 85

p 95-96

Second Floor Plan 1:200

By author. “Second Floor Plan 1:200.”Digital Graphic. 2019.

Figure 86

p 97-98

West-East Section 1:100

By author. “West-East Section 1:100.”Digital Graphic. 2019.

Figure 87

p 99-100

West Elevation Perspective

By author. “West Elevation Perspective.”Digital Graphic. 2019.

Figure 88

p 101-102

Physical 1:100 Model, overall view

By author. “Physical 1:100 Model, Overall View.” Photograph. 2019.

Figure 89-92

p 103-104

Physical 1:100 Model, elevation views

By author. “Physical 1:100 Model, Elevation Views.” Photographs. 2019.

Figure 93-96

p 105-106

Physical 1:100 Model, detail views

By author. “Physical 1:100 Model, Detail Views.” Photographs. 2019.

Figure 97

p 107-108

Physical 1:100 Model. View into communication office and meeting room through front entrance courtyard

By author. “Physical 1:100 Model, courtyard view towards communication office.” Photograph. 2019.

Figure 98

p 111-112

Final thesis defence setup

By author. “Thesis Setup.” Photograph. 2019.

Figure 99

p 113

Exhibition held at ARCAM on the Bijlmerbajes

Croatia, Claudia. “Bye Bye Bajes.” Photograph. December 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.arcam.nl/en/byebyebajes/>

Figure 100

p 115-116

The North York Centre for Architecture at night

By author. “North York Centre for Architecture, Night Time.” Digital Image. 2019.



Figure 1. This image of the Miami Center for Architecture & Design exemplifies the confluence of graphic communication and architectural information.

"What we need is an architecture of change—an architecture that moves the field beyond the design of buildings and toward the design of new processes of engagement with the political forces that shape theories, practices, academies, policies, and communities."¹

-José L. S. Gàmez and Susan Rogers

"Across these current crises, institutions of urban development must redefine themselves and form new public interfaces to generate new ways of thinking and acting."²

-Teddy Cruz

1. José L. S. Gàmez and Susan Rogers, "An Architecture of Change," in *Expanding Architecture: Design as Activism*, ed. Bryan Bell and Katie Wakeford (New York, NY: Metropolis Books, 2008), 19.
2. Teddy Cruz, "Foreword, Transcending the Foresight Divide," *Young Architects* 11 (2010): 9.

Introduction

On (Massive) Change

The role and practice of the architectural discipline in contemporary society is, once more, under pointed scrutiny; experts in the field—academics and professionals alike—are calling for spectacular reinvigoration from all levels of the discipline, from education to practice to policy, and they are attempting to unite diverse voices into an acute rallying cry; which at its core, asks the following: “Now that we can do anything, what will we do?”¹ In effect, they are stating the dire need for socially, politically, culturally and sustainably oriented architectures that enable the possibility for systemic change.² To probe this question further, we must first identify the context of this intense desire for recourse and derive the primary concerns that established it.

This is not the first occasion in which the discipline of architecture has generated the desire for a re-evaluation of architectural practice and pedagogy. Questioning the role of urbanization and industrialization to the creation of social equity, the modern movement sought rationality, order and cohesion in design to “give opportunity and freedom to everyone.”³ Nearing the close of the 1960’s, as the utopian ideals of modernism were revealed to be disconnected from the social worlds, the political agenda was also lost in its demise.⁴ In its wake, postmodernist theorists defined a new utopianism and attempted to reveal the elements that precipitated them; most importantly, they would bring to light that diversity cannot be designed for within universal frameworks: “However, without the ability to address broad societal goals, architecture was left to focus inward.”⁵ The discipline focused on its own internal

machinations and architectural discourse became caught in an endless loop of critique. The vast gulf created by the architectural discipline’s unwillingness to acknowledge the cultural and political crises of the time has carried into the 21st century—yet is only beginning to be bridged.

Now that in the 21st century we have an unprecedented capability to understand and learn from the past, given the immense documentation and ease of access to information made possible by globalization and the digital age, it should be assumed, then, that the social and political realities of our age are finally being addressed in the design of our built environment. Counter to this conjecture, there remains a gaping complication: the role of the architect is said to be becoming less and less relevant in contemporary society.⁶ The profession’s inability to confront pressing realities lies not only in its own resistances but also in its diminishing level of control: “Power is increasingly an asymmetrical component of the production of space. Developers, financial sectors, and public policy have served the purposes of powerful interests, and the architecture profession has followed behind blindly.”⁷

The loss of control also applies to the profession’s relationship with the greater public, its principal users. A survey conducted in 2012 amongst the British public revealed that the greater portion of respondents do not have a clear idea of the architect’s role in the building process,⁸ and the appearance of articles with ominous titles such as “Architecture Continues to Implode: More Insiders Admit the Profession is Failing,” and “Has Architecture Lost Touch with the People?” that have cropped up in

Figure 2. A familiar scene for the citizens of Toronto: cranes dominate the built landscape as the city continues to see rapid growth in its downtown core.



1. Bruce Mau’s and the Institute without Border’s seminal exhibition, accompanying book and radio programme entitled Massive Change asks other ambitious questions that broadly pertain to the design of the entire human world. Covering extensive ‘economies’ ranging from energy to military to movement to politics, each contributor to the text elaborates on the inventive use of design in their specific projects under these greater categories. Bruce Mau and Institute without Borders, “Introduction” in *Massive Change*, (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 2004), 15.
2. José L. S. Gámez and Susan Rogers, “An Architecture of Change,” in *Expanding Architecture: Design as Activism*, ed. Bryan Bell and Katie Wakeford (New York, NY: Metropolis Books, 2008), 19. See also Nishat Awan, Tatjana Schneider and Jeremy Till, *Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2011).
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., 20.
5. Ibid.

6. Anna Winston, “Architecture has a Serious Problem with Communication says Rem Koolhaas,” *Dezeen*, published May 24 2016, accessed December 8 2018, retrieved from <https://www.dezeen.com/2016/05/24/rem-koolhaas-architecture-serious-problem-communication-oma-american-institute-architects-aia-convention/>
7. Gámez and Rogers, “An Architecture of Change,” 24.
8. Max Thompson, “It’s True: People Don’t Know What Architects Do,” *Architects’ Journal*, published July 19 2012, accessed December 8 2018, retrieved from <https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/home/its-true-people-dont-know-what-architects-do/8633240>. article/

significant journals and magazines further reinforce this claim.⁹

For the majority of the public that has some awareness of the architectural field, it is most likely that their respective interpretations are largely informed by the proliferation of ‘starchitecture’ that is so often catapulted to the centre of the media’s attention.¹⁰ As Tsoukala, Terzoglou and Pantelidou aptly state: since terms such as progressive, innovative and iconic have a higher exchange value in the marketplace, “contemporary market forces are favouring the growth of a star system in architectural production based on technological innovation, spectacular imagery and formal acrobatics, and are neglecting the social, environmental and moral implications of spatial design.”¹¹ This perpetuates a calculated myth to the public, concealing the reality that most architectural production is in fact dictated by economic and political forces.¹²

Thus, the pressing call for transformative action in the discipline becomes clearer in light of these issues. To position this thesis within the larger agenda for change that is defining our contemporary age in architecture, the context of scale must be assessed.

The Importance of Scale

It is critical to consider the scale at which these allegations are most relevant, to understand that these are not sweeping statements that can be applied to the entire discipline of architecture. Many of the articles that fuel this thesis appear severe and one-sided when the specific context of scale is not reflected upon. Let us consider Bingler and Pedersen’s “How to Rebuild Architecture,” that generated a scathing response by powerful-voice-in-architecture Aaron Betsky—in which both views are contemplated

on in Shubow’s piece for Forbes.¹³ While Bingler’s and Pedersen’s most controversial statement is that architecture is disconnected from the users that we are meant to build for, Betsky scorned their argument in a response for the AIA’s magazine, *Architect*, to suggest instead that architecture should be about experimentation and “the shock of the new.”¹⁴ Yet, what is not explicitly distinguished is that the architecture being referred to in the former article is drastically different to the one described by the latter: Bingler and Pedersen are discussing architects working in the ‘middle tier’, the largest portion of professionals, those between the select few who design the world’s ‘starchitecture’ and the ones who work on focused, activist-type projects. Betsky, however, seems to be referring to the type of architecture mentioned earlier; buildings that are glamourized in the media for their “innovative” and “iconic” designs.

It is through observation of the disconnect between the profession and the public that occurs within the middle realm of architectural production that this thesis positions itself to critique, question and propose a solution for. While it cannot be said that all architecture does not account for its socio-political and cultural contexts, it seems that the widest disconnect between the discipline and the general public emerges in the middle scale, the scale in which the vast majority of architectural production occurs and within which most architects operate. At the community level, we observe how the greater part of the population has little awareness for the rapid growth and development ensuing around them and how they have virtually become desensitized to this due to the extent of its swiftness and proliferation. Although some efforts are being made to engage the public in the design of their built environment, there is much progress to be made if we are to authentically encourage a culture of discourse.

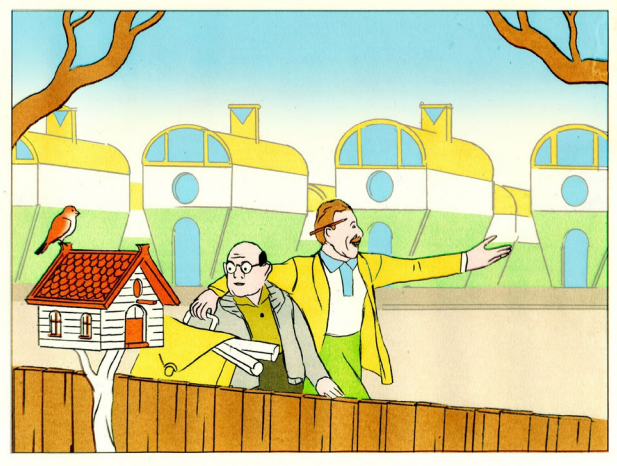


Figure 3. From the article entitled “How to Rebuild Architecture,” this comic depicts the ‘layman’ client ignoring the seductions of the ‘starchitect’, in preference for the simplicity of a birdhouse.

Privatization of Public Space

A significant obstacle to the improved engagement of the architectural discipline with the general public is the privatization of public space. While this is an issue within architectural discourse that can be expanded upon far more extensively, the element that is relevant to this argument is how, increasingly, the design of public space is being relinquished to the control of the developers, thereby allowing those with capital to dictate which voices are privileged in its future design. What methods are developers utilizing to engage diverse audiences and how often are they being measured for success?

What is of equal concern is that the decision-making power is ultimately in the hands of those that align architecture with the marketplace. Understanding that these are the primary motivations for developers, we cannot assume that the public’s input is of fundamental concern to the design of privately-funded public space. Awan, Schneider and Till then ask: “...what happens when the foundations of the market are undermined by its own excessive actions.”¹⁵ We can recall Rem Koolhaas’ scornful critique of architectural culture written in 2002 for *Obsolescence*, entitled “Junkspace,” which questions the values that contemporary architectural production is deriving itself from. A pertinent indictment from this essay states: “Junkspace builds with the economy but

it cannot contract.”¹⁶ Historically, in Europe, from the end of WWII to the 1980s, architects participated in rebuilding civic society. Along with this, architecture became the means to conceive visions of what society might become: “Architecture was public in many senses: who it was built for and who it was funded by. Architects themselves were likely to be public servants.”¹⁷ In present times, Sam Jacob argues that architecture and construction is almost entirely implemented by private enterprises, and that there exist far fewer publicly employed architects. In order to substantially re-engage the profession with the public, architects must gain renewed control over the design decisions made in the creation of public space. We must ask ourselves how our cities will develop and what will be the long-term consequences of this unprecedented growth without meaningful integration of the public’s and users’ understanding, opinions and approval. To achieve this, we must critically address the methods in which we engage the general public in architectural discourse and the design of their built environment.

Bridging the Disconnect

With the aforementioned critiques of architectural production in mind, it is no wonder that there exists a lack of general interest for architecture among the public, given that much of the built environment is being produced without worthwhile input from the users it is meant to serve. It is beyond time we as architects address the growing divide between the discipline and the public: “Perhaps more alarming is the reluctance of architects to even acknowledge our responsibility for this disconnect.”¹⁸ For too long architects have avoided the aspects of the world which cause them discomfort, aspects in which they cannot control, limiting themselves to the most static components of design in which they still retain some authority.¹⁹

9. See Kaid Benfield, “Has Architecture Lost Touch With the People,” *Citylab*, published October 28 2013 and Justin Shubow, “Architecture Continues To Implode: More Insiders Admit The Profession Is Failing,” *Forbes*, published January 6 2015.
10. Steven Bingler and Martin C. Pedersen, “How to Rebuild Architecture,” *The New York Times*, published December 15 2014, accessed December 8 2018, retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/16/opinion/how-to-rebuild-architecture.html?partner=rssnyt&emc=rss&_r=0. See also, Magali Robathan, “Alison Brooks: Public Perception of Architects Skewed by Media,” *CLADnews*, published March 15 2018.
11. “Abstract,” in *Intersections of Space and Ethos*, ed. Kyriaki Tsoukala, Nikolaos-Ion Terzoglou and Charikleia Pantelidou (London and New York: Routledge, 2017); Nishat Awan, Tatjana Schneider and Jeremy Till, *Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture*

(Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2011), 28. Additionally, the authors of *Intersections of Space and Ethos* note in the prologue: “The dialectic of agency and structure constructs the stereotypical images of the architect as either the individual genius who singlehandedly takes on the world or else the lackey of commercial forces[...].” xviii.
12. Awan, Schneider and Till, *Spatial Agency*, 31.
13. See Shubow, and Bingler and Pedersen
14. Justin Shubow, “Architecture Continues to Implode: More Insiders Admit The

Profession Is Failing,” *Forbes*, published January 6 2015, accessed December 8 2018, retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/justinshubow/2015/01/06/architecture-continues-to-implode-more-insiders-admit-the-profession-is-failing/#e44e9a24378c>
15. Awan, Schneider and Till, *Spatial Agency*, 28.
16. Rem Koolhaas, “Junkspace,” *Obsolescence* 100 (Spring 2002): 184.
17. Sam Jacob, “Architecture Might Have to Become Less Architectural,” *Dezeen*, published January 16 2014, accessed February 16 2018, retrieved from <https://www.dezeen.com/2014/01/16/opinion-sam-jacob-how-architecture-can-regain-social-significance/>
18. Bingler and Pedersen, “How to Rebuild Architecture.”
19. Awan, Schneider and Till, *Spatial Agency*, 28.



To begin bridging the disconnect, we must understand that the vast majority of architectural production that touches people’s everyday lives occurs within the middle realm, the realm largely dominated by the developers and contractors. The public has largely lost trust in the discipline because they are unable to participate, and when they are allowed to, their voices are not heard. Gàmez and Rogers offer a solution to this:

Prestige must be achieved through making design relevant to community practices and

issues, instead of through costly work for the elite. The percentage of those able to afford architectural services must be increased, and that goal entails a growth in the number of those who have access to the idea of architecture.²⁰

Of particular importance is the latter half of this claim; that there must be an effort to increase the number of those with access to understand architecture in the first place. This shifts the discussion towards the language the architectural discipline uses to

20. Gàmez and Rogers, “An Architecture of Change,” 24.

Figure 4. The role of the architecture centre is to disseminate architectural ideas to a wide audience and to make the discipline accessible to those not versed in design. An example of this is the AIA New York Center for Architecture in Manhattan.

express or explain itself. Binger and Pedersen note: “Architecture’s disconnect is both physical and spiritual. We’re attempting to sell the public buildings and neighbourhoods they don’t particularly want in a language they don’t understand.”²¹ The esoteric nature of the practice restricts those from engaging with its most salient ideas. To rebuild trust and involve diverse voices, people must feel equipped to join the conversation and empowered enough to have a say. In the book *Uneven Growth*, Teddy Cruz asks how we as architects can rethink the profession to be more inclusive, and posits the following:

It makes me think that we need to start by opening up and expanding our conventional modalities of practice, making architecture a political field and a cognitive system that can enable the “public” to access complexity, building collective capacity for political agency and action at local scales.²²

The Architecture Centre Typology

The discipline of architecture has addressed issues of communication in multiple ways, whether it be through print media, digital media, or in-person tactics such as installations, exhibitions or biennales. However, we must propose new modes of spatial practices that are embedded within public culture—which is where the Architecture Centre typology becomes most compelling. Broadly, an architecture centre demystifies and democratizes architecture through a variety of programming such as forums, exhibitions, lectures and tours, doubly educating the public as well as acting as sites of debate: “As forums for dialogue, architecture centers make room for all those complex demands to be formulated, debated and incorporated into what eventually becomes

the built environment.”²³ The idea that architecture required its own building to house its theories took shape in the early 20th century, as architects searched for acceptance of their profession and ways to advance the appreciation of architecture.²⁴ In the 1970s, the few centres dedicated to architecture that existed employed museological approaches. Dialogue surrounding these created a cultural energy that resulted in the founding of three major institutions in the 1980s: the Deutsches Architekturmuseum (DAM), the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA) and the Netherlands Architecture Institute (NAi).²⁵ Since then, dozens of centres have been established around the world, first substantially in Europe, but in the early 21st century, in the United States as well. In Canada, there exists fewer institutions, with the exception of the Canadian Centre for Architecture, with dedicated space for the dissemination and appreciation of architecture. Since differing circumstances almost always initiated their founding, it becomes clearer as to why no two architecture centres are the same. While an in-depth historical analysis will be provided in Part II, it is important to briefly expand on the diversity that exists within the architecture centre typology; particularly with regards to how architecture centres across the world vary greatly in size, programme and depth. That being said, each one of these centres holds a common goal: the attempt to communicate architecture to the public, to engage them with its main ideas and beliefs and to involve them in the production and discussion surrounding built space: “What binds them together is an unshakeable belief in a common set of values that enable people to understand and influence the development of their ‘place’.”²⁶ Evolving from the museological typology to move beyond mere documentation, architecture centres are not stagnant; they develop with social, political, economic and technological changes,

21. Binger and Pedersen, “How to Rebuild Architecture.”
22. Pedro Gadanho (ed.), *Uneven Growth: Tactical Urbanisms for Expanding Megacities* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2014).
23. Lynn Osmond, “The Power of Architecture Centers,” *Oculus* 69, no. 3 (Fall 2007): 38.
24. Sergio M. Figueiredo, *The Nai Effect*, (Rotterdam, nai010 publishers: 2016), 8.
25. Ibid.
26. Peter Luxton, “Foreword,” in *International Architecture Centres*, ed. Hannah Ford and Bridget Sawyers (West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons Ltd., 2003), 7.

which in turn alters their form and function.²⁷ Most consequentially, they are sites where new ideas are stimulated and initiated, allowing practitioners and citizens alike to meet on common ground to ask how and where architecture fits in society.²⁸

A New Centre for Civic Engagement in Architecture

The discipline of architecture is being challenged to change, in part because it is seen to be losing relevance within the field itself, but also in its connection to the public. The current methods of communication with the public are being readdressed in order to alter the ways in which the profession is perceived so we can re-establish our relevance in society, as evidenced by the establishment of architecture centres across the world. However, we must move beyond passive information dissemination to methods of communication that include the public: methods that communicate in an accessible language; that equip those not versed in design with the knowledge to have a say; that empower people to speak for or against changes in their built environment with confidence; and finally, that help generate an overall understanding, awareness and appreciation for architecture and design.

With this in mind, we ask the following questions: firstly, can an architecture centre serve as a locus for community engagement and participative debate to doubly engage those not versed in architecture about the discipline as well as prevent unforeseen, disconnected growth in their community? Secondly, could drawing from the more vibrant fields of communication design and graphic design aid in the architecture profession’s ability to engage and communicate? Finally, could the architecture centre act as a proactive means of spurring dialogue and debate between architects and residents to potentially have an effect on the quality of future development in

its respective area? The proposed building attempts to answer these questions by representing a new typology, one that is informed by the early examples that came before it, one that draws from the practices of communication agencies and graphic designers and one that is inextricably tied to the contextual relationship with its site.

The research portions of the thesis are divided in two distinct, yet cross-pollinating sections: architectural precedents and communication strategies. The architectural precedents section looks first to theorists that engage with the evolution of the architecture museum, to then overview the genesis of early architecture centres. Because the discourse surrounding these centres is relatively new and not as extensively documented, research from the fields of participatory design, public-interest design and architectural exhibition/museum design will be overviewed.

With regards to the theme of exhibiting architecture, Amber Baechler’s dissertation, “Exhibiting Architecture,” the conference “Exhibiting Architecture: A Paradox,” will be consulted to help elucidate the architecture centre as a new form of “laboratory” or “projective” museum that engages the users/visitors through multiple means such as forums, immersive exhibitions and more.²⁹ This succession of research leads to a detailed analysis of architecture centres: Sergio Figueiredo’s *The NAI Effect*, as well as Hannah Ford and Bridget Sawyers *International Architecture Centres* is analyzed extensively in combination with the various journal and magazine articles spanning numerous years that cover the topic of the architecture centre.

To compliment this theory, an examination of the current sites of dialogue and debate on architecture within the City of Toronto and the

Figure 5. There is much to be drawn from the practices of visual communication agencies and graphic design offices in the communication of architectural ideas. Bruce Mau’s “Know Canada” campaign cleverly framed Canadian identity for those outside of or unfamiliar with the nation.



district of North York, the chosen site for the thesis, is considered. With the architectural and communication portions of the research fuelling its design, the final proposal for the Centre for Civic Engagement in Architecture will further develop the proposition that creating an accessible public discourse surrounding the architectural profession will enable all citizens to be able to partake in, contend with and advocate for the future of their built environment.

27. Ibid.
28. Maarten Kloos, “Amsterdam Centre for Architecture,” *A + U: Architecture & Urbanism* 451 (2008): 146, 148.
29. Amber Baechler, “Exhibiting Architecture - Appropriating the Toronto Harbour-front” March Thesis, Carleton University, 2012; Sergio M. Figueiredo, *The NAI Effect*, (Rotterdam, nai010 publishers: 2016).



Figure 6. What are the consequences of rapid, unchecked growth? Citizens that are left alienated from their environment. Strides must be made in an effort to engage those who inhabit a community in a conversation about the future of their built environment.

Part I

Architectural Precedents

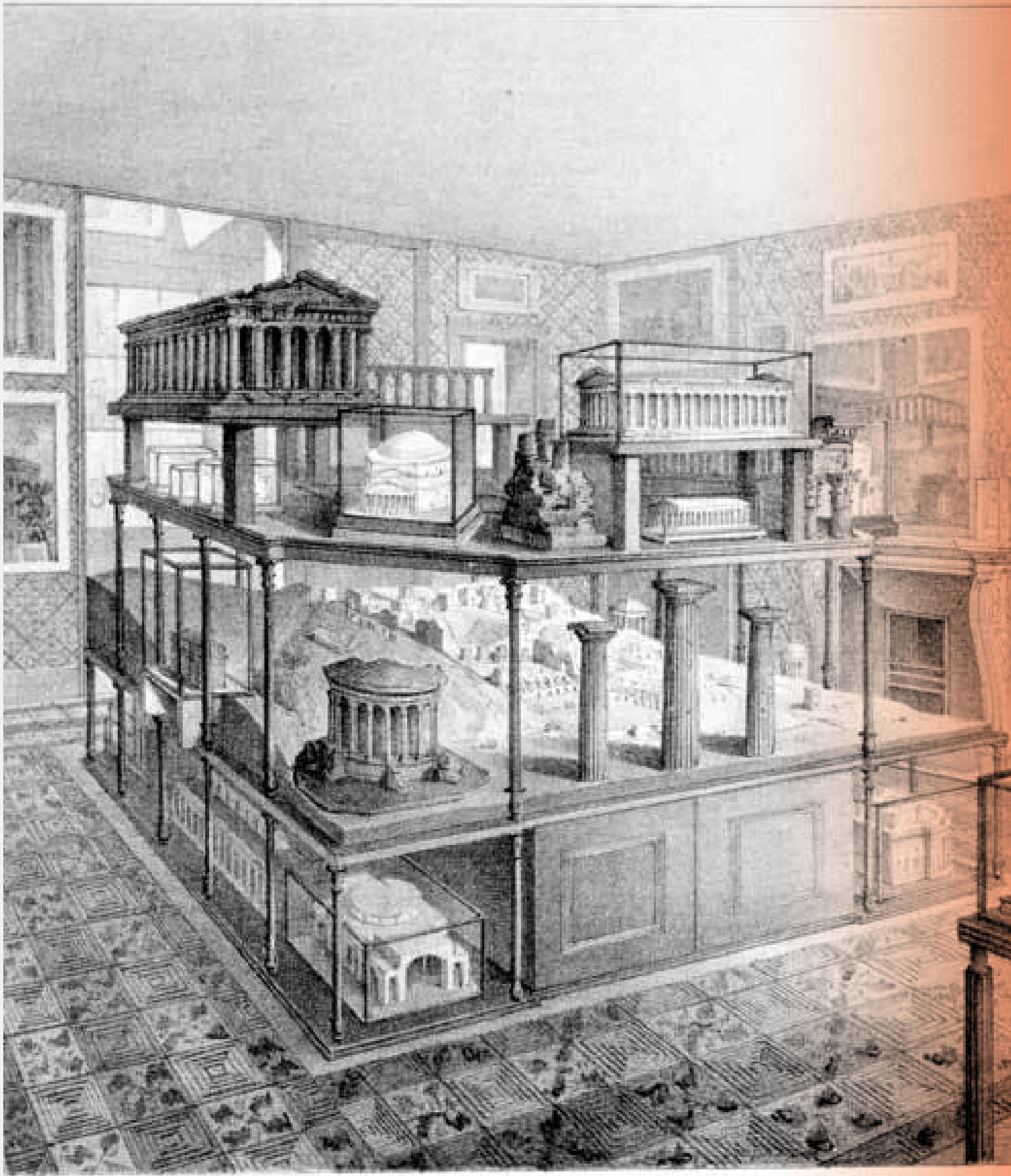


PLATE XXIII
VIEW IN THE MODEL ROOM

Figure 7. The model room in the John Soane Museum demonstrates an attempt to make architecture accessible to the public through communicative devices that they can engage with and readily understand.

History of the Typology

The genesis of the architecture centre as a typology can be found in the evolution of the architecture museum; its museum counterpart can be traced even further back to private collections of architectural material and to the display of architecture in Parisian salons. To begin to grasp the context of architecture centres today we must analyze the motivations that led to their origin which will illuminate the common goals and operational activities of each centre.

Architecture Museums

Though it may seem that the public engagement and exhibition of architecture is a relatively new practice, efforts to allow broader access to architectural drawings can be attributed to the private architectural archives and collections of the 18th century, which led to the establishment of early architecture museums in the 19th century. A recent study of this evolution can be found in Sergio Figueiredo's *The NAI Effect*, a text that provides an overview of the context and founding of the Nederlands Architectuurinstituut (Netherlands Architecture Institute or NAI) in Rotterdam, but also gives a comprehensive history of the development of architectural museological institutions. Figueiredo frames these organizations with common goals of promoting architecture to be distinctly tied to the archive, which he uses as a categorization device to define three types: architecture libraries, architecture centres and architecture museums.¹ While architecture libraries are characterized by their large collections but little to no exhibition space, and architecture centres the opposite, according to Figueiredo, the architecture museum is a combination

of both: an extensive architectural archive and adequate exhibition space.²

As a confluence of both archival material and exhibition space, the architecture museum draws from private architectural collections and Parisian salons, respectively. The collection of architectural archival material began as early as the inception of the practice itself, as architects collected drawings and models to act as tools of daily reference. Their collections came to reflect their own work as well as they began to include drawings from architects and buildings they admired. Inigo Jones can be argued as having the most significant architectural collection in Europe in the late 17th century: "Jones's [sic] architectural archive did not include only the drawings produced by his own architecture practice, but also 'contemporary drawings from English, French, Italian and Fleming sources'."³ With the establishment of the archive, primacy was given to ideas over construction, and it used representations to become "the central instrument in architecture's disciplinary apparatus."⁴ Jones' collection was eventually passed along to Lord Burlington, who sought to elevate architectural taste and influence the development of architecture in Britain—the ability to be accessible was made possible now that architecture was freed from its spatial and temporal confines through the archive.⁵

The most prominent collector in the history of architecture museums is Sir John Soane, who desired to establish an architecture museum from his private collection. He first opened his archive to students, which was a step forward in increasing public accessibility to architectural ideas: "Only through greater public exposure could the architectural ideas

1. Sergio M. Figueiredo, *The NAI Effect*, (Rotterdam, nai010 publishers: 2016), 15.
2. Ibid., 16.
3. Terrence Riley, 'Drawing into a Collection: A Context of Practices,' in *Envisioning Architecture: Drawings from the Museum of Modern Art* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2002), quoted in Sergio M. Figueiredo, *The NAI Effect*, (Rotterdam, nai010 publishers: 2016), 18.
4. Figueiredo, *The NAI Effect*, 19.
5. Lord Burlington's collection was comprised of over 500 drawings. Figueiredo, *The NAI Effect*, 23.



Figure 8. The Netherlands Architecture Institute is among the first comprehensive architecture centres established.

collected by Soane be disseminated and new meanings be constructed.”⁶ The motivations for the genesis of the earliest architecture museums is representative of the critical depth, as Figueiredo coins it, of the early architectural archive. Since the primary ambition was the “elevation and edification of society,” these collections embodied specific aspects and styles of architecture that were deemed exceptional or worthy of upholding.⁷ MoMA’s Department of Architecture was founded in 1932 to prominently disseminate modern architecture and the modern movement. Like the early collectors of architecture, the MoMA’s new department “...aimed to focus its attention and resources on specific territories of the discipline...”⁸ In this way, the archive becomes an exercise of power which attempts to lead the architectural discipline in certain directions.

In contrast, the archive that employs encyclopedic breath is influenced by Enlightenment ideals of democratization, especially in France, in the establishment of the public museum. Modeled in a similar fashion to the encyclopedia, which attempted to encompass the “largest possible breadth of material,” this type of museum based itself on scientific methods of classification to create an architectural taxonomy.⁹

While reading an encyclopedia was fundamentally a private affair, visiting the galleries of the museum was a shared

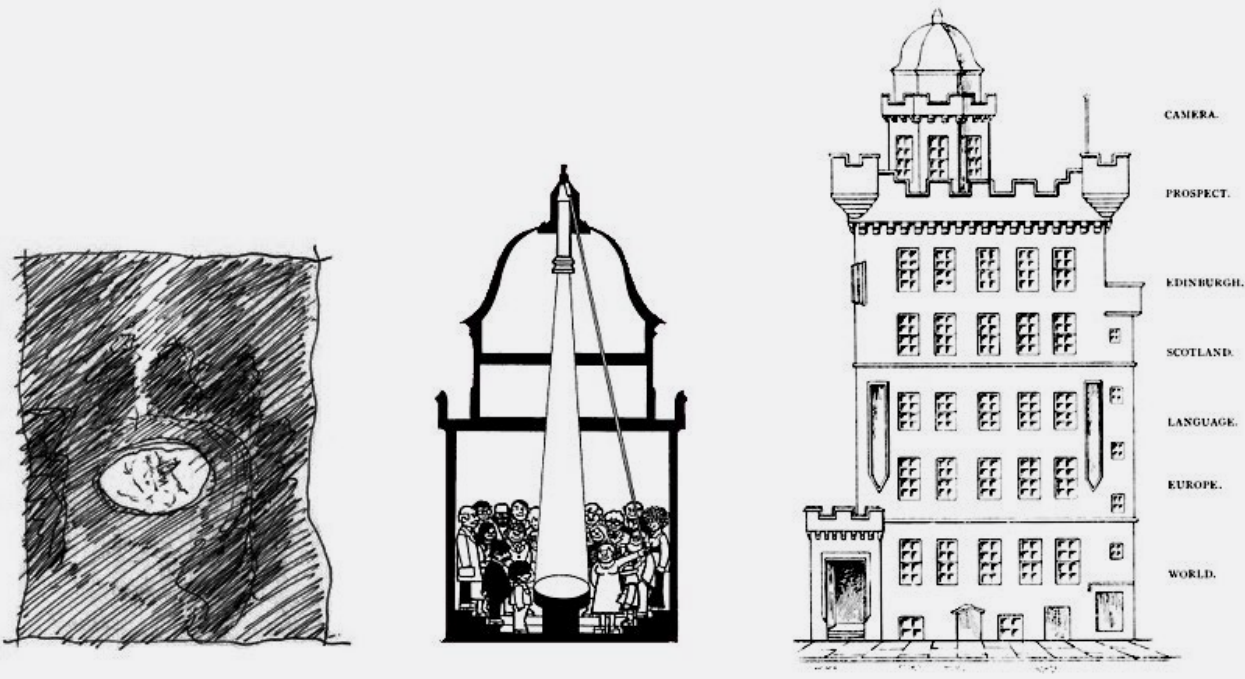
experience. Furthermore, the museum not only provided (virtual) universal access to culture and knowledge by placing ‘objects which had previously been concealed from public view into new open and public contexts’, but also created a public space for the conduction of rational discussion transversal to social statues or wealth.¹⁰

In increasing public accessibility to the archive, Louis-François Cassas’ collection of 754 models can be cited as an ambition to present architecture so that it was accessible to a wider audience, over the standard display of plans, elevations and sections.¹¹ Cassas’ collection was to be purchased by the École d’Architecture of the Institut de France, under the advisement of three architecture professors (Léon Dufourny, J. N. L. Durand and Antoine-Thomas-Laurent Vaudoyer), who realized early on the correlation necessary in advancing the discipline: “...that both popular dissemination and critical discussion [were required].”¹² The commission believed that Cassas’ collection would aid in the creation of a public museum of architecture, with the goal, again, of advancing architecture.

Specifically, Dufourny argued that the education of architecture students and architects was a vain exercise when not accompanied by an education of the public. He attributed the ruling mediocrity of architectural practice to the general public’s lack of interest in architecture, claiming that: ‘If the taste of the public was generally enlightened, architects would be forced to put more perfection, or at least more severity, in their works...For the progress of art is a result of the purity of public taste.’”¹³

Though Dufourny’s plans for a museum

Figure 9. The Outlook Tower in Edinburgh, Scotland, was conceived by Patrick Geddes. With several exhibitions spaces topped by a camera obscura, visitors were able to experience multiple scales of the built environment, from the world to the building itself.



of architecture were never realized, it initiated discussions arguing for the public exhibition of architecture and helped solidify the belief that dissemination to a wider audience would result in the advancement of the discipline.¹⁴

Early Architecture Centres

The aspirations for the prototypical architecture centres can be likened to those of the early architecture museums, given their similarities in subject matter and program. In some cases, the line between what is considered an architecture museum and an architecture centre is especially blurred, given that each “type” often borrows from the other. The case studies within this chapter overview the varying types of centres identified, but first, it is worth noting some early architecture centres that stand apart from their museological counterparts.

The Outlook Tower was the vision of community activist, biologist, and the “founder of modern town planning”: Patrick Geddes. Geddes believed that citizens would be able to perceive their

own identity more clearly if they had a strong sense of space and place. He believed that “...one of the main ways to empower a citizen’s sense of self, and to promote civil society, was to give people the power to understand and control their environment.”¹⁵ Geddes acquired the building which would become the Outlook Tower in 1890, which was an old observatory in Edinburgh, Scotland. At the top of the building, Geddes installed a camera obscura, which reflected the city to visitors and allowed them to see vast portions of streets, live, in miniature in front of them. The other experiences of the Outlook Tower included models, maps, and other curiosities. Geddes’ Outlook Tower arranged its exhibitions in widening frames of reference, enlarging the visitors scope from Edinburgh, to Scotland, to Europe, and to the world: “Then you popped out of the exit door a newly educated citizen, wide-eyed at the world and ready to take part. You belonged.”¹⁶ The founding of this proto-architecture centre occurred because Patrick Geddes was passionate about creating active citizens and allowing people to form a relationship with their built environment.

6. Ibid., 24.
7. Ibid., 27.
8. Ibid., 28.
9. Ibid., 34-37.
10. Ibid., 35. Embedded quote from Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics, Culture: Policies and Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995), 39, quoted in Sergio M. Figueiredo, *The NAI Effect*, (Rotterdam, nai010 publishers: 2016), 35.
11. Ibid., 39-40.
12. Ibid., 41.
13. Ibid., 43. Embedded quote from Léon Dufourny, ‘DOCUMENT XII: Rapport Fait À Son Excellence Le Ministre de l’Intérieur Sur La Collection de Modèles d’Architecture

de M. Cassas. Par M. Dufourny Directeur de la Galerie d’Architecture’, in: Werner Szambien (ed.), *Le Musée d’Architecture* (Paris: Picard, 1988), 143, quoted in Sergio M. Figueiredo, *The NAI Effect*, (Rotterdam, nai010 publishers: 2016), 43.

14. Ibid., 44.
15. Tom Dyckhoff, “Introduction,” in *International Architecture Centres*, ed. Hannah Ford and Bridget Sawyers (West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons Ltd., 2003), 8.
16. Ibid.



Not all of the early centres were conceived this way. In the Netherlands, before the birth of the NAI, a few organizations dedicated to the discipline of architecture existed. One in particular can be credited for the creation of architectural discourse in the country: the Maatschappij Tot Bevordering Der Bouwkunst (Society for the Promotion of Architecture). The society was founded on the basis that architecture required its own discourse in the Netherlands, and that an emphasis on architecture’s “intellectual, cultural and artistic dimensions,” rather than on their quality of representation, be taken: “[this] favoured the valuation of architectural processes over products, ideas over construction, allowing architectural societies to dematerialized, record , collect and disseminate architecture.”¹⁷ The society took to hosting

competitions, meetings, lectures, disseminated publications and held exhibitions, and through these events, created the necessary discourse.

However, these activities also established a particular context where the enunciation of architecture and its engagement with the general public became crucial for the discipline’s own advancement...Effectively, the Maastschappij was a platform for architectural debate; promoting and advancing architecture by engaging in several activities that would later become the staple of modern architecture museums [and centres].¹⁸

The need to initiate these events stem mostly from the

17. Figueiredo, *The NAI Effect*, 62.
18. Ibid., 63.

Figure 10. The Infobox in Postdamer Platz, Berlin, became a symbol of reunification in the city postwar. Acting as a temporary architecture centre, it hosted exhibitions and events to inform residents of the development slated for the area.

association’s desire to elevate the status of the architect in the Netherlands. Similar to the work of The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) in London and to the Architekten-Verein (Architects Club) in Berlin, the Maatschappij sought to establish the architectural discipline as a form of art—that it was not solely a technical endeavour. In the 1880’s the society realized the importance of engaging the public as “...strategic for the advancement of architecture, but also for the political relevance of the society.”¹⁹ Therefore, the society took to diffusing the notion of architecture as a public concern. The variety of activities and events they held had a transformative effect on the culture in the Netherlands.²⁰ In 1885, the society inaugurated their communal building, which would not only serve as their offices but also as place where the display of architecture could be made accessible to the public through open exhibitions. The program for the building included a main gallery space, meeting rooms, a library and reading room, and editorial offices: "It allowed the Maatschappij to translate its objectives and activities to a particular building programme, one remarkably similar to the NAI’s programme over a century later."²¹ The society not only served as a critical foundation for the development of an architectural discourse in the Netherlands, but also paved the way for the establishment of a permanent building dedicated to the display and debate of architectural ideas, with its communal building acting as a successful prototypical architecture centre.

In more recent history, the Infobox that was erected in Berlin, Germany, following the dismantling of the Wall, serves as another potent example of an early architecture centre that was founded under specific circumstances. As Berlin searched to define its identity during reunification in the 1990s, every effort was made to involve the public in this process. With drastic changes occurring rapidly

19. Ibid., 76.
20. Ibid., 75.
21. Ibid., 81.
22. Zitzlsperger, Ulrike. “Filling the Blanks: Berlin as a Public Showcase.” In *Recasting German Identity: Culture, Politics, and Literature in the Berlin Republic*. Rochester, New York: Camden House, 2002.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.



Figure 11. Postdamer Platz underwent rapid growth in the early 21st century. The images above depict the area after WWII vs. what it looks like today.

all across the city, controversies were sparked. The Postdamer Platz development in particular received widespread attention, given its scale and intensity of construction.²² The Infobox was erected as a temporary structure with the purpose of engaging the public in a conversation about the future of the Platz.

The Infobox catered both for Berlin residents and for an increasing number of tourists. Multiple exhibitions areas...were all intended to promote the future of the city. Mock-ups of the new centre, information films with dramatic background music, emotive artefacts such as coffee-cups from the famous Cafe Josty, once situated on the square, and the impressive view from the roof of the building all conveyed a sense of leaving the past behind and the promise of a new tomorrow.²³

With its projective tone, and its ability to turn the exhibition into an event, the Infobox attracted approximately 9 million visitors during its six years of existence. It symbolized the reunification of Berlin and became a source of civic pride as well.²⁴

The Architecture Centre

It is important to impart that the typology of the architecture centre is significantly difficult to narrow into a cohesive set of descriptive terms. Of the little literature that exists on the subject, almost all have noted that each architecture centre varies greatly in size, events, program and scope. The naming terminology also differs: in some cases, these centres are referred to as urban centres, as architecture museums and as architecture institutes as well. What binds these centres together is their desire to disseminate architectural ideas and make them accessible to a broader audience; democratizing and demystifying the discipline. We have observed the evolution of the architecture centre through its roots in the history of architecture museums, to identify just how critical of an effect the context for the founding of each centre has on its type. In the 1980s, the Deutsches Architekturmuseum (DAM), the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA) and the Netherlands Architecture Institute (NAi) were all founded under the same call for institutions of architecture to act as sites of architectural dissemination and production—which had a profound impact on their goals and operation. Today, dozens of architecture centres exist around the world, each hosting a myriad of events that cater to the conversations pertinent to their founding. Upon surveying the landscape of architecture centres around the globe, similarities in approach were identified among those studied, and 5 types of centres were identified: *the institution*, *the centre*, *the hub*, *the temporary* and *the digital*. These categories

were defined by looking at the operative functions of each centre, and focused mainly on its relationship to the architectural archive and its programming. The **"institution" type** has an inextricable connection to its archive, and usually employs a museological approach to the dissemination of information; it focuses primarily on exhibitions and less on other event programming. The **"centre" type** is considered a centre in its truest sense: with no archive, the architecture centre “proper” is allowed to focus entirely on the events being held. Usually, the programming for the centre type focuses on a non-expert audience, and attempts to generate new and innovative ways to engage multiple publics. The **"hub" type** occupies a middle ground between the institution type and the centre type: exhibitions derived from archival or non-archival material remain important, but events are of equal importance. Often, the hub focuses on issues outside of architecture to encompass urban planning and other forms of design as well. The **"temporary" type** of centre does not require a permanent structure to elicit an architecture centre. This type of centre focuses on time and location specific issues that aim to generate lively conversations during its operation. The **"digital" type** requires no physical space for a centre at all; it capitalizes on the digital age of information communication to create virtual spaces of debate and dialogue, rendering the architecture centre intangible. The following case studies overview an example of each of the aforementioned types of architecture centres identified.

Figure 12. The AIA New York Center for Architecture features a fully glazed storefront facade, providing views deep into the building and allowing those passing by to view the events occurring within.





Figure 13. The large lawn of the Canadian Centre for Architecture becomes a lively place for tourists and residents of the city to spend time outdoors.



Figure 14. The pristine interior of the Centre serves as an unintrusive backdrop for the museological display of architecture, through drawings and models.

Case Study: The Canadian Centre for Architecture

The Canadian Centre for Architecture, or, CCA, is an example of what is being identified in the terms of this thesis as an **"institution" type** architecture centre. The CCA is a foundational architecture centre and museum that, at the time of its inception in 1979, was one of the few institutions dedicated to the display and study of architecture.²⁵ The Centre was conceived by Phyllis Lambert who had an impressive personal collection, and in combination with efforts to make this collection public, also actively pursued the preservation of local historic architecture in Montreal. The Centre, as Lambert describes, was founded as "...a study centre and museum devoted to the art of architecture past and present, with the three-fold conviction that architecture, as part of the social and natural environment, is a public concern, that architectural research has a profound cultural influence, and that scholars have a social responsibility of the highest order."²⁶ The CCA's massive collection is one of the largest architectural archives in the world, and its comprehensive breadth undoubtedly renders the centre indispensable to most architectural theorists and historians. Its resources consist of drawings, prints, photos and written material that has facilitated advanced research in the fields of theory and practice.²⁷ The CCA is credited with, in some instances, having shaped architectural discourse with its influential exhibitions that employ a rigorous and painstaking approach to the research and presentation of architectural material; the comprehensive breadth of its archive and its presentation of its material is what defines the CCA's approach as having an encyclopedic breadth, according to Figueiredo.²⁸

Yet, as a proclaimed architecture centre with clear motivations to communicate and engage with the general public, the CCA does not meet their

The Institution

defined ambitions. Lambert, in the early years of the Centre, stated that the CCA, as a museum, "...interpret[ed] its collection for the public through exhibitions and publications that revealed the richness and significance of architectural culture and stimulate[d] awareness of contemporary issues in architecture."²⁹ Today, the CCA's website reads: "The Canadian Centre of Architecture is an international research institution operating from the fundamental premise that architecture is a public concern...with the specific aim of increasing public awareness of the role of architecture in contemporary society and promoting research in the field."³⁰ Despite this, it is a widely held belief among many within the discipline of architecture itself that the CCA, despite efforts to become increasingly accessible and appealing to a wider range of audiences, speaks solely to a specialized audience: traditionally, those within the field of design or museum-goers. The building itself is imposing: an article written in 1989, the year the building opened, noted that the centre's "...dignified design unashamedly proclaims the cultural institution as a high-minded, civilizing force..." and goes on to state, "The austere exterior doesn't sufficiently celebrate the Centre's cultural significance to the wider city, nor does it rapidly convey where you enter the building."³¹ Within the Centre's walls, the exhibitions that are held are often cited to target a very specific audience, though their mission statement would suggest otherwise. Architectural concepts are written about or displayed in ways that only those versed in the discipline can readily understand. Though each exhibition draws from a wealth of incredible documentation and presents fresh, sometimes controversial, but always critical and worthwhile ideas, they are speaking to the profession, and the profession only. The CCA seems to be most concerned with continuing to advance the newly established practice of architectural exhibition making, and how

25. Suzanne Stephens, "L'architecture parlante," *Architectural Record* 177, no.9 (1989): 57.
26. Phyllis Lambert, "The Architectural Museum: A Founder's Perspective," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 58, no. 3 (1999): 305.
27. Ibid., 309.
28. Figueiredo, *The NAi Effect*, 185.
29. Lambert, "The Architectural Museum."
30. "About," CCA, accessed March 27, 2019, <https://www.cca.qc.ca/en/about>
31. Stephens, "L'architecture parlante," 57.

The Centre

they have become sites of architectural production and thought-making in their own right. Another point to note is the CCA's international scale; by speaking to an international audience the Centre is able to generate a more significant impact in the discourse surrounding architectural theory, however its engagement on a local and national level is less consequential.

The CCA's relationship to its archive is what constitutes it as an institution. In its ambitions to act as the premiere repository for architectural knowledge for scholars and professionals, it is performing exceedingly well. In its desire to make architecture a public concern, the CCA has yet to create the type of environment or content that would foster a more diverse range of audiences to learn and discuss architectural ideas.

Case Study: Chicago Architecture Center

The Chicago Architecture Center, or CAC (formerly the Chicago Architecture Foundation), was founded in similar fashion to the CCA—in response to the demolition of the historic Glessner House in 1966—yet, as an architecture centre, in its operation, is entirely different from its Canadian counterpart. The Chicago Center's archive does not consist of holdings such as drawings, documents and images; instead, the city itself becomes the archive, and its buildings the collection. Chicago, which is regarded by many as the birthplace of modern American architecture, is home to stunning examples of twentieth century architecture and the people of Chicago are proud of its collection.³² In its successful attempts to save the Glessner House, the Center then began to focus on generating public awareness of the city's "rich architectural fabric."³³ Rather than exhibitions, today, the Chicago Architecture Center places precedence on its tours; whether by foot, bus, bicycle or boat, the hundreds of

tours that the Center has developed are attended by the thousands, by tourists and locals alike: in 2017, the CAC's attendance reached a record high of 690,000 visitors.³⁴ In addition to its tours, there are lectures, workshops, youth programming and exhibitions held as well. Unlike the CCA, the CAC addresses a non-expert audience, and the few exhibitions it is home to focus on content that is most pertinent to everyday citizens and visitors to Chicago. Because the CAC focuses on its programming and events, it is considered a "centre" type. Most notably, its expanded model of the city, which encompasses over 4,000 3D-printed buildings, is the subject of an interactive exhibit and accompanying film that overviews Chicago's architectural history and development, and speaks to the Center's desire to target a wider audience, which can be seen traced back to early motivations behind the displaying of architecture.³⁵ Additionally, the CAC's approach that brings visitors out on the streets to observe architecture first-hand eliminates the traditional debate surrounding the representation of architecture in the gallery; however, when it is being represented through its exhibitions, the conversations it produces are directly applicable to the surrounding city. Most notably, its permanent exhibit, 'Building Tall', displays iconic skyscrapers from Chicago and around the world, asking questions about design and engineering goals as we push buildings higher and higher.

The Chicago Architecture Center is the leading example for many architecture centres across the world. It has successfully engaged those not versed in design to actively seek learning about architecture and the built environment and has truly become a destination for all things architecture within the city of Chicago. It has also effectively created an architectural discourse among the people of Chicago so that the citizens who live there not only actively talk about

32. Emily Hotaling Eig and Laura L. Harris, "City as Museum: Building as Artifact: Chicago as Case Study," *The Journal of Museum Education* 10, no. 3 (1985): 21.
33. Ibid., 22.
34. Chicago Architecture Center Annual Report 2017
35. See Part I for further historical context. Jay Kozlarz, "Chicago Architecture Center Debuts New Riverfront Location to the Public," *Curbed Chicago*, published August 31, 2018, accessed March 27, 2019, <https://chicago.curbed.com/2018/8/31/17805292/chicago-architecture-center-open-public>

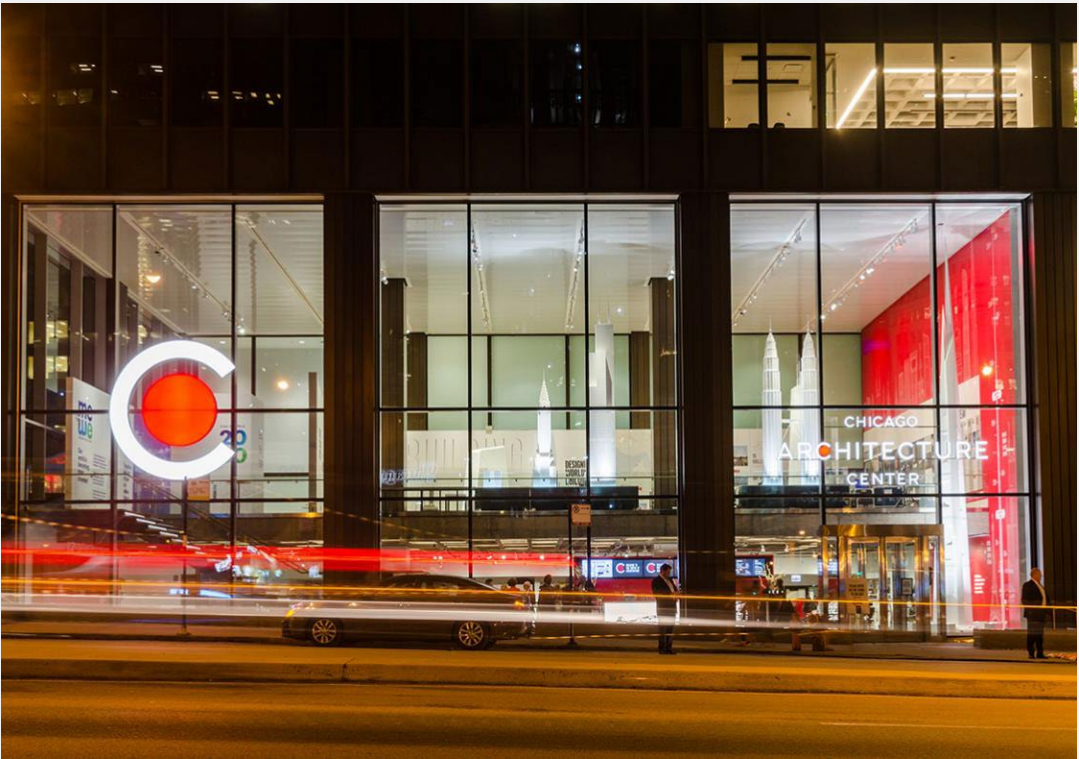


Figure 15. The Chicago Center for Architecture's new location occupies a prominent place on the city's waterfront; its all-glazed facade invites visitors to go inside.



Figure 16. A permanent exhibition on skyscrapers is especially pertinent in Chicago given that it is considered the birthplace of the American skyscraper. It also features models of tall buildings slated for construction.



Figure 17. ARCAM's building was built in 2003 and designed by architect René van Zuuk. It features a striking curvilinear zinc-coloured facade that wraps around the building. Its glazed portions provide views deep into its spaces.



Figure 18. An exhibition entitled "Farming the City," held in 2011 at the ARCAM building.

The Hub

and deliberate their built environment, but demand to see good design as well; ultimately achieving the aspirations of the earliest architecture centres.

Case Study: Arcam Centre for Architecture

The Architectuur Centrum Amsterdam, or Amsterdam Centre for Architecture, and more commonly known as ARCAM, acts as one of the most prominent architecture centres in the Netherlands, a country which has several of these cultural institutions. ARCAM is an example of a centre that occupies a blurred position on the spectrum of centre types and is considered a **"hub" type**. Founded in 1986, the Centre began modestly and was located within the Amsterdam Academy of Architecture. What launched the Centre to the forefront of Amsterdam's radar was the publication of ARCAM MAP, which looked at many aspects of Amsterdam's future in a confrontational way: "This map changed the thinking regarding spatial planning in the Netherlands and moreover it immediately established ARCAM's reputation—at home and abroad."³⁶ For the first time professionals were alerted to the myriad of plans that were made for the future of Amsterdam, and how, when overlaid, it was made clear that multiple contradictions were being made, and there was little programmatic coordination between municipalities.³⁷ Momentum gathered and coalesced to result in a dedicated physical space, designed by architect René van Zuuk and completed in 2003. Its noteworthy design features a singular swooping curve of zinc-covered aluminum, that opens onto Amsterdam's eastern waterfront and to the city: "The building's glazed areas rise its full height, expanding the interior perceptually and merging ARCAM experientially with its subject matter: Amsterdam itself."³⁸

The Centre borrowed archival material from

larger institutions such as the former Netherlands Architecture Institute for its exhibitions, but also largely focused on its public programming as well. ARCAM believes in providing moments for contemplation and reflection while simultaneously stimulating active participatory attitudes, which is why it hosts lectures, debates and symposiums to support its exhibitions. ARCAM, as with many other architecture centres in Europe, fall under the category of the hub, because they straddle the line between institution and centre "proper"; many consider it important that the type of thinking they attempt to generate occur in a museum ambience and are therefore tied to developments in museum architecture.³⁹ For this reason, the audience visiting the centre is extremely varied, ranging from professionals to citizens to tourists, though it is most likely to attract those already versed in design to some degree, given its desire to retain some museological standards.⁴⁰

Case Study: BMW Guggenheim Lab

The BMW Guggenheim Lab was a two-year investigation of urban issues that was held in three different cities across the globe, facilitated by an Atelier Bow-Wow-designed carbon fibre and black mesh-clad elevated structure that could be easily dismantled and re-built. The BMW Guggenheim Lab is thus considered a **"temporary" type** of architecture centre. The lab hosted a series of events such as exhibitions, public talks, discussions, screenings, workshops and games under its box-like canopy, and it considers itself "part urban think tank, part community center and public gathering space."⁴¹ The bottom half of the Lab structure is open and flexible, allowing it to be configured accordingly.⁴²

"Rather than architects educating the public

36. Maarten Kloos, "Amsterdam Centre for Architecture," *A + U: Architecture & Urbanism* 451 (2008): 146.

37. Indira van't Klooster, "De digitale ARCAM KAArt," published September 18, 2006, accessed March 28, 2019, <https://www.archined.nl/2006/09/de-digitale-arcam-kaart>

38. Sarah Amelar, "Ahead of the Curve: ARCAM in Amsterdam," *Architectural Record* 192, no. 2 (2004): 65.

39. Kloos, "Amsterdam Centre for Architecture," 146.

40. Ibid., 148.

41. Nick Compton, "The BMW Guggenheim Lab stages an urban trends exhibition in New York," *Wallpaper**, published October 21, 2013, accessed March 28, 2019, <https://www.wallpaper.com/architecture/the-bmw-guggenheim-lab-stages-an-urban-trends-exhibition-in-new-york>

exhibition-in-new-york

42. Amy Frearson, "BMW Guggenheim Lab by Atelier Bow-Wow," *Dezeen*, published August 4, 2011, accessed March 28, 2019, <https://www.dezeen.com/2011/08/04/bmw-guggenheim-lab-by-atelier-bow-wow/>

The Temporary + The Digital

on how to behave within spaces, it is the public who should have the autonomy of spatial practice in their cities,' stated Yoshiharu Tsukamoto and Momoyo Kaijima of Atelier Bow-Wow. 'We have always been advocates of people regaining ownership in order to shape the city around them, and are very pleased to participate in the launch of the BMW Guggenheim Lab.'"⁴³

Aided by its temporality, significant interest was created where the structure was erected, producing a buzz that drew citizens to partake in the conversation. It also successfully brought together architects, urban planners and designers and the public through its innovative programming that utilized games, social experiments and even prompts for groups to explore the city to collect data. One visitor remarked the following:

"The pop-up space, designed by Atelier Bow-Wow, was airy and inviting, with the feeling of an open-air theater...In keeping with the lab's theme of "Confronting Comfort," they had broken attendees into groups to discuss varying aspects of that most comforting and urbane beverage, coffee. People of all ages were sitting around tables making charts about every aspect of coffee, from the way it is produced and shipped to the cups in which it is consumed."⁴⁴

The goal of this experiment was to generate ideas regarding the urban environment specific to the location the structure was situated in; the findings from all three cities, New York, Berlin and Mumbai, were then compiled and displayed at the Guggenheim in New York, for an exhibition entitled 'Participatory City: 100 Urban Trends from the BMW Guggenheim Lab'. The BMW Guggenheim Lab was an excellent

example of participatory architecture and public engagement that serves as a model for strategies of involving citizens in discussions concerning their built environment.

Case Studies: Shape My City [shapemycity.com] and Urban Toronto Forums [urbantoronto.ca]

The **"digital" type** demonstrates how physical space is not always required to engage the public in debate and discussion. Shape My City is an online resource for Torontonians to discover what grassroots groups are doing to create livable communities. It attempts to connect people with similar interests by providing a platform to join existing initiatives or attend events taking place in the city. No singular location serves as Shape My City's base; instead, its primary purpose is to shed light on the existing groups and the conversations that are occurring.

Another online resource in the City of Toronto is Urban Toronto, which is a news website and forum that focuses chiefly on new development in and around the city. The online forum is home to thousands of threads where commenters discuss and debate upcoming projects. As with Shape My City, Urban Toronto does not have a physical location that is attributed to it, but lively conversations are occurring in the relative isolation of the website. Though both have established efforts to capitalize on the digital age of information exchange in a successful way, the conversations in either of these resources do not necessarily actively engage new audiences, and do not often coalesce to create tangible change, as some of the physical architecture centres have done.

43. Ibid.
44. Sarah Goodyear, "A Pop-up Urban Experiment: The BMW Guggenheim Lab," *Grist*, published August 4, 2011, accessed March 28, 2019, <https://grist.org/cities/2011-08-04-a-pop-up-urban-experiment-the-bmw-guggenheim-lab/>



Figure 19. The BMW Guggenheim Lab was a traveling temporary urban experiment that invited citizens to the pavilion to engage in conversations about the built environment and urban life. Here it is seen erected in Berlin in June, 2012.



Figure 20. Shape My City is a digital platform for discovering different grassroots advocacy groups and the events they hold in Toronto. Topics vary greatly from issues pertaining to policy, sustainability and the built environment.

Conclusions

From this overview of the evolution of the architecture centre to the analysis of dozens of varying centres that exist across the world today, the most critical observation questions the success of the centre’s ability to achieve its goals of engaging diverse audiences and in raising awareness of the architectural discipline.

Little critical literature documents the success of these centres, yet one important paper, a study entitled “Promoting A Sense of Place: An International Study of Architecture Centres,” echoes the critique that can be made on the climate of architecture centres today: that the typology of the architecture centre has the opportunity to define itself as a new form of cultural institution:

Finally, we found that centres could better acknowledge their singularity as a type of organization with a specific topic and goals peculiar to themselves. Rather than blindly emulating the methods employed by other educational or cultural organizations, centres could recognize that their goals are specific, requiring rigorous examination of their programming.⁴⁵

We can observe this in the “institution” type, in its ties to the display of fine arts in art museums. This is the case as well with the “hub” type, which borrows from both the “centre” and the “institution” type, but it is not as clearly defined, and perhaps attempts to be too many things at once. The “temporary” and “centre” type hold the most potential, as they focus primarily

on the events that take place and the engagement of multiple publics. Yet, where the “centre” type becomes most salient is in its permanence: by acting as a site that fosters civic pride, the “centre” has the most potential to become a new form of cultural building that is knitted within a community—yet some of these centres still do not achieve their goals in a substantial way. Although most make claims to be places for debate and exchange, the programming focuses more on dissemination than on creating environments or opportunities for dialogue and discussion. Sarah Lappin and Ruth Morrow point out the following as the list of ambitions for most architecture centres across their research:

- To raise awareness about architecture/built environment issues;
- To increase debate and exchange of ideas about architecture/built environment and
- To improve the quality of design.⁴⁶

Yet, even the most successful centres, such as the CAC in Chicago, are less adept at fostering critical discussions for visitors and do not readily engage with the feedback generated by some of its interactive material.⁴⁷

To achieve the goals that Lappin and Morrow have highlighted, and to do so in a significant way, the current typology of the architecture centre must evolve to incorporate programming that is interactive and dialogical in nature. Events should be paired with opportunities for debate and discussion; visitors should be made aware of conversations and

Figure 21. Debate and exchange should become foundational within the architecture typology through workshops, public talks, and round-table discussions where a culture of dialogue is fostered.



contentions within the city. Activating the material being disseminated from the centre by providing a platform for those not versed in architecture to have conversations with design professionals, urban planners and city officials aids in the creation of a culture of discourse, and more specifically, a culture of discourse on issues related to the built environment. This could be through the inclusion of more workshops, public talks, the ability to meet with architects and city officials, and round-table discussions.

Most importantly, the architecture centre has the potential of creating a discourse within the city it is located in, with the possibility of having an effect on the future quality of the built environment. Instead

of being an isolated institution, however, a dedicated communication strategy must be employed to engage new audiences in the conversations occurring within the centre.

The architecture centre can be a new form of cultural institution in its own right. “It may be that debate and exchange are not only means to better achieve goals, but could be the single most exciting and unique aspect to what centres offer.”⁴⁸ By providing an opportunity for active citizenship within a community through open dialogue, an architectural discourse among citizens can be promoted, and they might even begin to feel more connected to and proud of their built environment.

45. Sarah A. Lappin and Ruth Morrow, “Promoting a Sense of Place: An International Study of Architecture Centres,” *International Journal of Architectural Research* 7, no. 1 (2013): 148.
46. Ibid.
47. Observations made during a trip to Chicago Architecture Center in March, 2019.

48. Lappin and Morrow, “Promoting a Sense of Place,” 148.



Figure 22. The Center for Architecture & Design in Seattle, Washington hosts exhibitions, lectures and other events year-round to explore how design shapes communities.

Part II

Design Proposal

The North York
Centre for Architecture



Figure 23. An aerial view of Toronto looking towards Lake Ontario. The areas of highest density and development can be seen along Yonge: North York Centre is in the foreground, Yonge & Eglinton afterwards, and downtown Toronto in the background.

To properly develop the wager of the proposed architecture centre, it must be located in an area projected to see rapid growth. Learning lessons from the hasty development in Toronto, which has left citizens largely disconnected from their built environment, siting the centre strategically to act as a preventative measure of detached urban development is required to develop the thesis' propositions. For this reason, the community that will be studied is primarily the Willowdale, Lansing and Newtonbrook neighbourhoods in the district of North York, but more specifically the area known as North York Centre, which is defined by the stretch of Yonge Street between Sheppard Avenue and Cummer/Drewry Avenues.

North York, which became a part of Metropolitan Toronto in 1954, later became its own city in 1979, to then finally be amalgamated with the rest of Metropolitan Toronto in 1998 to form the new City of Toronto. As Toronto continues to grow at an unprecedented rate, its outlying areas have been densifying as the population of the megacity continues to soar. This isn't the first time North York has seen rapid expansion; in the 1950s, as waves of new immigrants searched for affordable housing, North York's population climbed significantly.¹ At this time, North York could be confused with any other characteristic North American suburban town, though urbanization into the 1980s began to define a distinct "downtown" core—what became known as North York Centre. Following the extension of the Yonge subway to Finch Station, the freshly promoted 'City of North York' sought intense development of its downtown with the arrival of North York Centre station. Mel Lastman, the former city mayor, dreamt of creating "Downtown, Uptown" and championed a new civic square, library,

1. During WWII, North York's population was 27,000; by the 1950's it had climbed to 150,000.

Siting the Centre

centre for performing arts, and encouraged mixed use development of North York Centre with new businesses and restaurants. Today, the area is a vibrant and diverse part of the district of North York, attracting people from surrounding neighbourhoods for its shopping, cuisine, entertainment and nightlife.

The City of Toronto is determined to continue densifying the areas surrounding major transit nodes and corridors as urbanized hubs. As the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) expands its reach into cities and towns such as Vaughan and Richmond Hill, a similar push for expansion is set for areas further and further north of downtown Toronto, especially around these new transit nodes. With regards to North York, several new stations are slated to be built in the near future, extending the Yonge line north from Finch into the town of Richmond Hill. Similarly, the University-

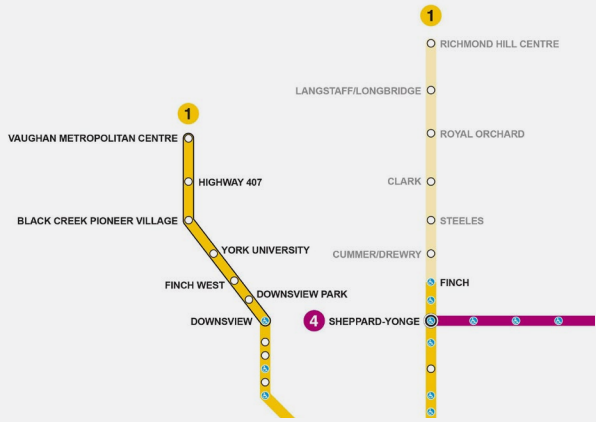


Figure 24. The Yonge-University line is slated to extend northward from Finch to Richmond Hill Centre. With the city's agenda to densify transit hubs, the areas surrounding Yonge north of Finch are projected to see rapid growth.



Spadina line recently completed construction of an extension into the City of Vaughan. North York Centre is quickly becoming the city’s fastest growing area, with development taking off in 2000: from 2001-2006, 54% of buildings constructed were 5 storeys or higher, and 43% of the construction in the ward occurred during this period. In anticipation of this boom, and of the new stations north of Finch, numerous large-scale developments have been completed or are under varying phases of construction. Usually, these developer-led projects consist of multiple condo towers with interior and exterior public

space at ground level. It appears that the race to put up buildings to meet market demands supersedes the desire to create cohesive, livable communities surrounding these hubs. Instead, it seems that any and all development is welcome, regardless of how it fits into the community. Following in the footsteps of the pattern of development we are observing in Toronto’s downtown core, no clear goal is defined for the type of built environment North York desires to create, and if there is, it is reflective of the whims of developers and financial sectors, not of the community that resides there. If we entertain the notion that the development

Figure 25. The images compare North York Centre in the 1990s vs in 2016. In a period of about 20 years, the area has changed drastically. There is also a noticeable dramatic shift in scale between highrises and single family dwellings.

occurring is what the community desires, it is most likely since superficial efforts are being undertaken to encourage conversations about the quality of built environment or create an architecture culture that enables residents to question what is happening around them; a facet which the centre—the North York Centre for Architecture—desires to address.

Defining a Public

North York Centre is within Ward 18, Willowdale, which is one of the city’s most populated and dense wards.² It is also among the fastest growing areas; since 2006, it has seen population growth at 19.2%, which is on par with the increase in population observed in the downtown core. The neighbourhood is extremely diverse, with 67% of the population being a visible minority, and 61% of the population are immigrants. The average household income is around \$87,000 and 70% of the population has post-secondary education. With this in mind, the area can be considered largely middle-class. The largest portion of occupied private dwellings are 5 storeys or more, at 61%, while the second largest, single-family dwellings, sits at 25%; a contrast which is easily visible in the built environment. The median age is around 38 years old. The area consists of many families, but also of single dwellers or couples without children, though there is no significant spike in any of these groups.

The success and relevancy of the centre will require it to speak to its audience—the Willowdale community—which consists of multiple publics.

2. Linda White, “North York Centre continues transformation,” *Toronto SUN*, published September 24, 2018, accessed March 16, 2019, <https://www.toronto.com/news-story/4818790-top-7-most-populated-wards-in-toronto/>; “Top 7 most populated wards in Toronto,” *Toronto.com*, published September 2, 2014, accessed March 16, 2019, <https://www.toronto.com/news-story/4818790-top-7-most-populated-wards-in-toronto/>

Existing Groups and Organizations

North York

- North York Historical Society
- North York City Council (City of Toronto)
- West Willowdale Neighbourhood Association
- Bayview Cummer Neighbourhood Association

City of Toronto Initiatives

- Design Review Panel
- Toronto Planning Review Panel
- Planners in Public Spaces
- Chief Planner Roundtable
- Youth Engagement Strategy
- Public Consultations

Walking Tours

- Jane’s Walks
- Doors Open Toronto (City of Toronto)
- Walking Tours (through Heritage Toronto)
- Toronto Architecture Tours (through TSA)

Professional Organization

- Toronto Society of Architects (TSA)

Other

- DesignTO (formerly Toronto Design Offsite Festival)
- No. 9
- Heritage Toronto
- Sidewalk Labs
- East Scarborough Storefront

Figure 26.

Widely perceived as a challenge in achieving criticality, a broad audience is necessary so that the centre can serve as an establishment, a new type of public institution, that becomes knitted within the community, much like the library and community centre are irreplaceable institutions within civic life.

The targeted public of the proposed centre becomes distinctly defined upon recognizing the existing conversations generated by organizations, councils and advocacy groups already established in North York and Toronto (see Figure 26). In North York, the North York Community Council, which was created



Figure 27. The grand opening of the Moriyama and Teshima Architects-designed library for North York Centre, held on May 13, 1987.

alongside the City of Toronto’s three other community councils post-amalgamation, focuses on local issues including planning, development and neighbourhood matters. Other unofficial groups include the North York Historical Society, which aims to preserve and disseminate North York’s historical sites and its unique past.³ Among the neighbourhood associations for the Willowdale area, the West Willowdale Neighbourhood Association and Bayview Cummer Neighbourhood Association (among others) are active in the community, meeting with city officials and attending public meetings on behalf of members.

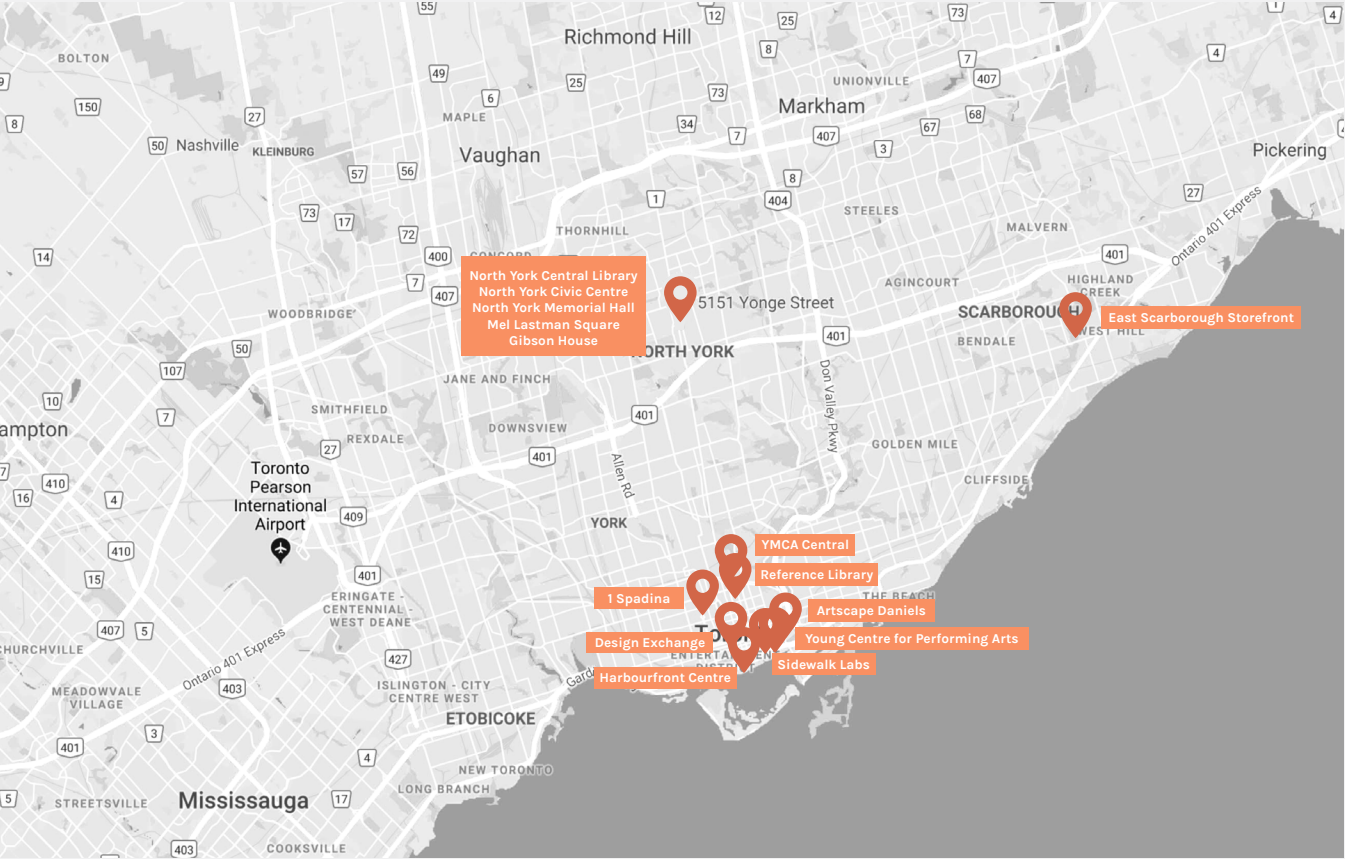
There are several other organizations that operate within the larger City of Toronto, therefore

are applicable to North York as well. The City of Toronto has created several outreach and engagement strategies, some of which are more active than others, or have since been dissolved. The most active is the Design Review Panel, which consists of private sector professionals including architects, urban designers and engineers who deliberate on projects that will affect the public realm: “The Panel provides advice for both private development and public projects, including advice on new urban design policy. Advice is based on professional judgment, understanding of good design principles, conformance with the Official Plan and other related documents (design guidelines, secondary plans etc.), and the design quality of the subject project.”⁴ Other initiatives include the Toronto Planning Review Panel, a group of residents selected through a randomized process that allow diverse voices to be brought to planning processes in the city. Additionally, the Planners in Public Spaces group brings planners to spaces such as parks, recreation centres and festivals, to allow citizens the opportunity to engage in conversations in a more informal setting; these events occur more sporadically. Held occasionally are the Chief Roundtable discussions, which are intended as a public forum for citizens of Toronto to discuss challenges within the city through collaborative engagement.⁵

More specialized groups and organizations not necessarily affiliated with the City of Toronto include No. 9, an organization dedicated to bringing awareness to sustainability and built environmental concerns to youth through outreach in schools and public art programming.⁶ The Toronto Society of Architects (TSA) is a volunteer-based organization that is a local chapter of the Ontario Association of Architects:

“The TSA plays an advocacy role in the City, ensuring that architecture and design are key

Figure 28. This map outlines the most frequently used venues for events held by organizations and grassroots groups in Toronto that deal with topics pertaining to the built environment [see Figure 26].



considerations in public discussions and in processes that have an impact on our built environment...The TSA organizes and sponsors a wide variety of initiatives including forums, exhibitions, publications, competitions, film series and celebrations that engage the architectural profession, its sister disciplines, and the public.”⁷

Walking tours are also organized by groups such as Jane’s Walks and Doors Open Toronto; the Toronto Society of Architects also organizes its own walking tours around the city.

Though diverse, these organizations all have a core element of civic engagement that they wish to instill—and they achieve this, some more successfully than others, but the conversations among them are largely happening in isolation of each other. Dialogue

and cross-pollination of ideas is rarely happening among them, and strong opinions are derived with little consideration of another group’s discourse. The aim of the proposed architecture centre is to host the multiple agendas across these organizations to create synergies between them that would coalesce in active citizens able to engage in informed discussions and well-versed debates with those that hold decision-making power. Therefore, the audience, which would be considered of ‘multiple publics’, is catering to the existent members of the aforementioned organizations.

3. “About,” *North York Historical Society*, accessed March 17, 2019, <https://nyhs.ca/about/>
4. “Design Review Panel,” *City of Toronto*, accessed March 17, 2019, <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/outreach-engagement/design-review-panel/>
5. “Chief Planner Roundtable,” *City of Toronto*, accessed March 17, 2019, <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/outreach-engagement/chief-planner-roundtable/>
6. “Mission,” *No.9*, accessed March 17, 2019, <http://www.no9.ca/mission-2/>

7. “About the TSA,” *Toronto Society of Architects*, accessed March 17, 2019, <http://toronto-societyofarchitects.ca/about/>

Program(ming)

Prior to the design of the architectural program, the programming of the centre must be carefully considered in order to best represent the community’s needs while also advancing the typology of the architecture centre. By documenting the programmes held by the aforementioned organizations in North York and Toronto, the following is a compiled list of events that could take place in the centre: public forums, exhibitions, lectures, workshops, film screenings, youth programmes, and festivals cover the programming that the existing organizations are hosting, and could potentially find a home at the architecture centre. In surveying the landscape of architecture centres across the globe, and from understanding the varying types of centres, it is clear that the centre requires some additional programming that helps foster, facilitate and incite active citizenship and civic engagement in architecture. This includes the integration of communication-related events, such as the publishing of a monthly zine with citizen contributions, as well as programming that may not be directly architecturally related, but creates the draw and exposure to the centre: book launches, makers markets, live theatre, and coffee meet-ups are examples of the types of events the centre would encourage to allow the widest contact possible and ensure the building becomes a public institution nested with the community (see Figure 29).

Designing the Programming

The design of the architectural program responds to the programming directly. This way, the building itself can be read through the program as

Figure 29. The compiled list of events that could take place at the proposed centre, in no particular order.

defined by the events that take place in the centre. First, early research was conducted to determine a sense for the way each event is carried out. Next, an exercise in research-creation was conducted with the design of eight posters advertising events that could occur at the centre, drawing from the existing programmes and conversations from community groups and organizations in North York and Toronto. This provided key information to the target audience, time of day and engagement techniques required for each event, which aided in the creation of event profiles. The profiles generated for each event outlined key information, including anticipated attendance and physical space requirements (see Figures 51-53). These information points aided in determining which events could occur in similar spaces (see Figure 54). This exercise distilled a collection of spaces that form the functional program for the new centre for architecture. They are listed here in order of importance to the centre’s mandate to foreground dialogue and debate between citizens and those with decision-making power: meeting and workshop rooms, communication offices, an exhibitions space, a children’s space, outdoor space, a main entrance, a lecture hall, a bookstore and café (see Figure 55). From there, an early adjacency diagram was designed (see Figure 56). The program profiles which outline maximum capacities and functional requirements for each space and were informed by information from the event profiles, aided in determining these adjacencies (see Figure 57).

exhibition / library + bookstore

makers market / live theatre

collaborative workshop / festival

film screening / panel discussion

competition display / photo-walk

book launch / public talk /

children’s programming / gala

symposium / monthly zine launch

coffee date with an architect /

walking tour / concert / lecture

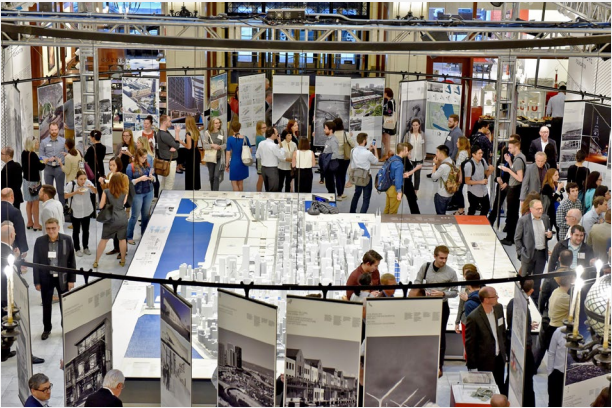
Examples of Architecture Centre Programming:



Figure 30. Exhibition



Figure 31. Lecture



Competition Display Figure 36.



Youth Programming Figure 37.



Figure 32. Conference



Figure 33. Symposium



Library Figure 38.



Bookstore Figure 39.



Figure 34. Film Screening



Figure 35. Festival



Workshop Figure 40.



Walking Tour Figure 41.

Event Posters Designed for the Centre:

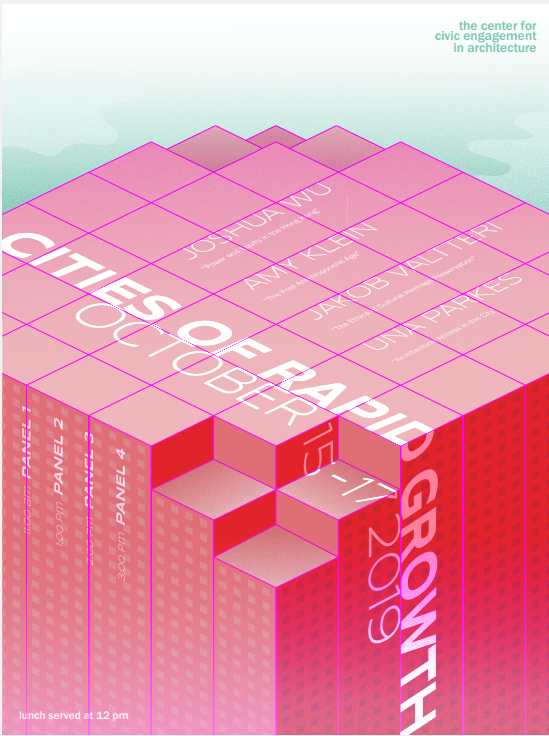


Figure 42. Symposium

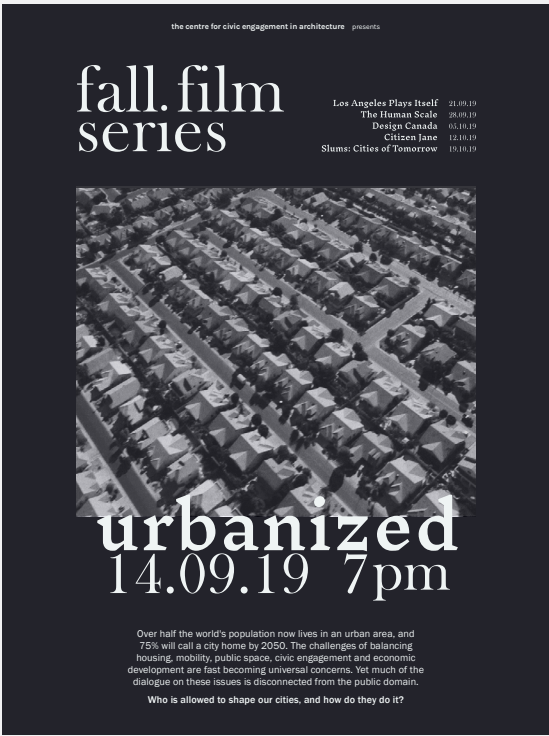


Figure 43. Film Series



Youth Programming Figure 46.



Zine Publication Figure 47.

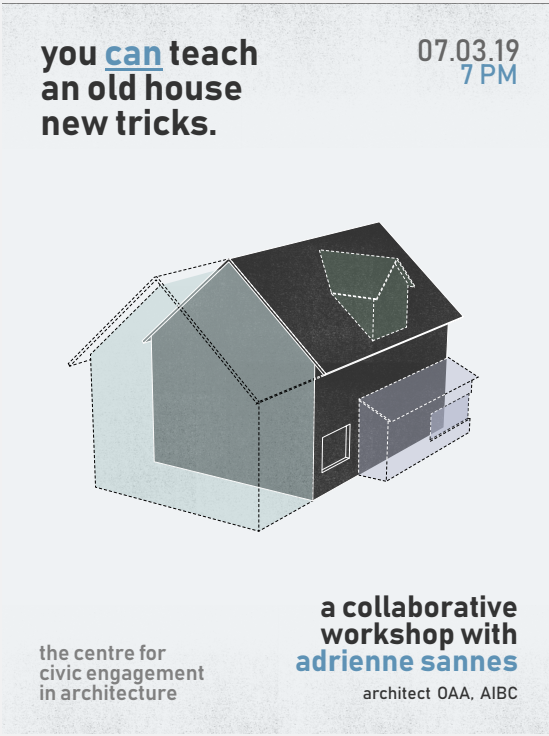


Figure 44. Workshop



Figure 45. Exhibition







Gala Figure 48.



Walking Tour Figure 49.

Who will be attending? Is it:

    
in the morning / afternoon / evening / night / all day ?
for children / young adults / adults / seniors ?

adults that are parents / working professionals / unemployed / business owners ?
a demographic that is disenfranchised / middle class / wealthy ?
for design professionals / those interested in design / those not versed in design ?
with architects / developers / planners / city officials ?

Event Profiles:

exhibition



Appeals to a wider audience, from young adults to seniors, of multiple demographics. Suitable for design professionals to anyone interested.

notes

Capacity: **max 150 people**
Space: **Exhibition Space / Outdoor Space**

- requires a large flexible spce with a lighting grid and hanging support
- large exhibition material storage, also for packaging and crates
- loose seating storage space
- closet lift for access to grid
- small kitchen adjacent

library + bookstore



Open during hours of operation for the centre, the library/bookstore appeals to a very wide audience. Open access to materials.

notes

Capacity: **approx 5,500 sq. ft.**
Space: **Library**

- stacks
- circulation desk / purchase counter
- sorting room
- seating for bookstore
- could this be the architecture-only branch of the Toronto Public Library so that the collection is not managed by the centre?

makers market



Targets young adults to seniors. Appeals to middle-class to wealthy audience. Usually attended by those interested in design.

notes

Capacity: **~100 people**
Space: **Exhibition Space / Outdoor Space**

- happens in exhibition space
- multiple booths will be set up
- access to electricity for each booth
- spill out to outdoor area in warmer months
- kitchen facilities able to be used if necessary

collaborative workshop



Engages the disenfranchised and those not versed in architecture. Geared towards adults and seniors, though a wider range of workshops can be held.

notes

Capacity: **10 - 30 people**
Space: **Meeting Rooms**

- these workshops are the main essence of the centre, priviledging the meeting spaces for visibility and accessibility
- should there be access to digital tools / makers space?

festival



Appeals to a wide audience. Multiple events take place during a festival which is usually over the course of three to four days.

notes

Capacity: **max 300 people**
Space: **Multiple**

- ability to have events happening simultaneously
- open house for communications offices
- indoor / outdoor

book launch



Geared towards adults; usually design professionals and those interested in design.

notes

Capacity: **~100 people**
Space: **Lecture Hall**

- might happen jointly in the exhibition space and the theatre space
- access to kitchen for food / drink

[opposite] **Figure 50.** Types of questions asked to best understand the target audience of the centre and its programming.
Figure 51. Event profiles were created to best grasp capacities, spaces requirements and other programmatic requirements.

Event Profiles:

film screening



Can attract young adults, adults and seniors. A wide range of topics screened appeals to design professionals to those not versed in design.

notes

Capacity: 75 - 100 people
Space: Lecture Hall

- part of themed film series
- will there be a short introduction for each film?
- A discussion afterwards?

competition display



Mainly for adults and seniors. Engages those that are concerned about their community. Appeals to a those interest-ed in design and those not versed.

notes

Capacity: 15 - 75 people
Space: Exhibition Space

- lighting grid and hanging grid is essential
- storage space
- space somewhere dedicted to collecting / displaying public comments and concerns

live theatre



Appeals to mostly seniors and adults. Usually those that are interested in design and the arts.

notes

Capacity: 30 - 75 people
Space: Lecture Hall

- lecture hall must be adjacent to a meeting room or flexible room space that can act as a “backstage” area for performers
- stage lighting will be required in the lecture hall

children’s programming



Programming for children that ranges from drawing to model-making to de-sign-build projects.

notes

Capacity: max 30 children
Space: Children’s Space, Library, Outdoor Space

- appropriately scaled furniture
- the space will get very messy
- events can happen simultaneously with adult programming
- ability to move into library, or into outdoor space
- visibility for parents

Event Profiles:

gala



Mainly appeals to design professionals, city officials, planners, etc. Usually to mark anniversaries of the centre or large donations.

notes

Capacity: max 150 - 200 people
Space: Exhibition Space, Outdoor Space

- more extensive kitchen will be required for support staff
- might bleed into other rooms; can meeting rooms open wider to increase floor space?

walking tour



Suitable for young adults and adults. Must be relatively mobile. To educate those interested to learn about their city and its successful architecture.

notes

Capacity: 10 - 30 people
Space: Main Entrance / Lobby

- Gathering space in lobby, or ability to open a meeting room adjacent to lobby as a gathering space before the walking tour

concert



Appeals to young adults and adults. Can attract a crowd that is unfamiliar with architecture—functions to expose the existence of the centre.

notes

Capacity: ~75 people
Space: Lecture Hall or Exhibition Space

- similar to live theatre event in the spaces / equipment necessary

photo-walk



Appeals to young adults and adults who have an interest in architectural photography; a specialty walking tour.

notes

Capacity: 10 - 30 people
Space: Main Entrance / Lobby

- Similar to walking tour, but with emphasis on taking photos and sharing them online
- Gathering space in lobby, or ability to open a meeting room adjacent to lobby as a gathering space before the walking tour

Figure 52. Event profiles [continued].

Event Profiles:

lecture



Mainly for design professionals and those interested in design, this is a more formal event that discusses architectural issues in-depth

notes

Capacity: **max 150 people**
Space: **Lecture Hall**

- access to stage for lecturer(s)

monthly zine launch



Younge adults will find this an exciting way to engage with architectural content. Having the ability to contribute fosters a sense of agency.

notes

Capacity: **15 - 30 people**
Space: **Communications Office / Meeting Room / Exhibition Space**

- Tied to the work of the communications office in the centre, the monthly launch of the zine could potentially occur in a large flexible meeting room in the communications office itself?

panel discussion



Architects, planners, city officials, etc. are gathered together to share opinions and to debate. Open to those who are concerned about their community

notes

Capacity: **approx 5,500 sq. ft.**
Space: **Lecture Hall / Exhibition Space**

- Access to stage for multiple lecturers
- Ability to create a forum setting, therefore spillout into exhibition space might be necessary

symposium



A series of lectures held throughout the day grouped under a common theme. Appeals to design professionals and those interested in design.

notes

Capacity: **~100 people**
Space: **Lecture Hall**

- similar equipment necessary to panel discussions and lectures

Event Profiles:

coffee date with an architect



Geared to young adults who are interested in design and the architectural profession.

notes

Capacity: **2 - 4 people**
Space: **Cafe**

- Small meeting between professionals and students occurs in cafe

forum



Opportunity for the public to voice opinions and discuss/debate with architects, planners and city officials. Appeals to a wide audience.

notes

Capacity: **30 - 50 people**
Space: **Exhibition Space**

- loose seating arranged in a way that best supports discussion and debate

Figure 53. Event profiles [continued].

Which events require the same type of space?



Figure 54. Upon detailed analysis of each event, connections were able to be made between them to identify which could occur in the same type of space.

Program Required:

Meeting / Workshop Rooms
Communications Offices
Exhibition Space
Children's Space
Outdoor Space
Main Entrance / Lobby
Lecture Hall
Library + Bookstore
Cafe

Figure 55. The architectural program determined for the proposed centre, loosely ordered in terms of hierarchy

Program Adjacencies:

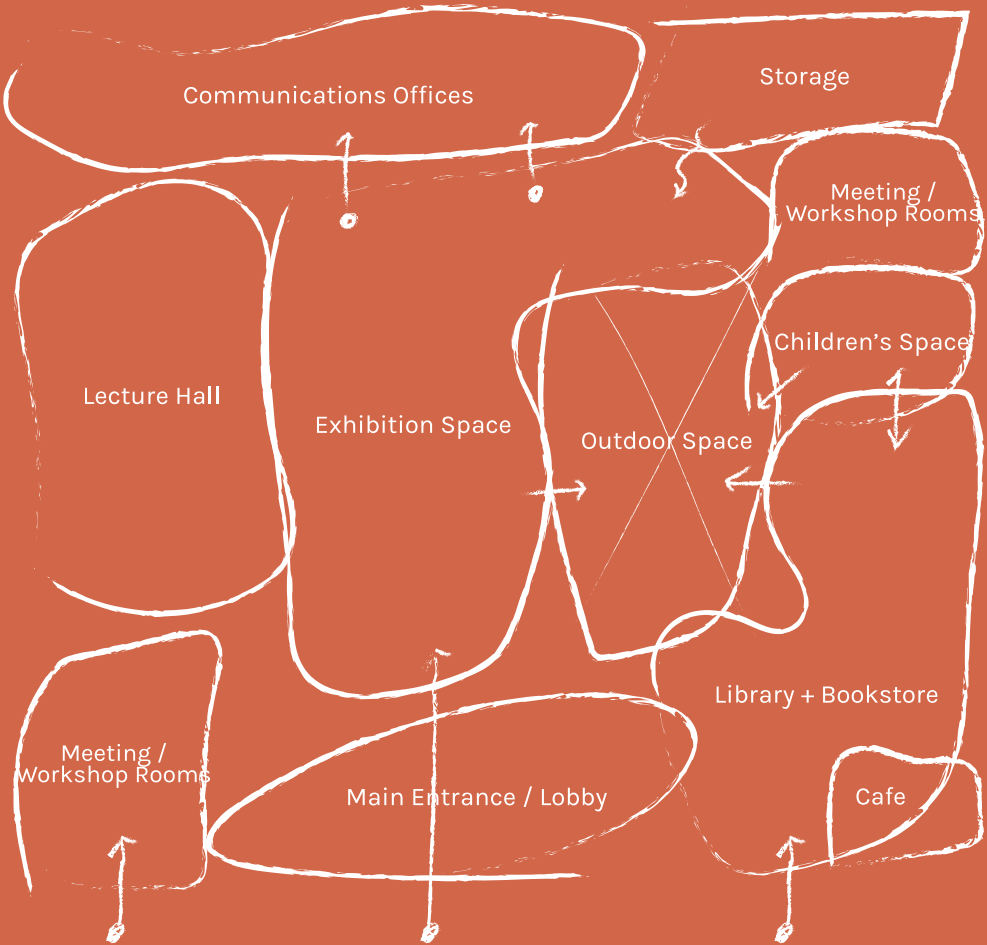


Figure 56. An early adjacency diagram.

Program Profiles:

Exhibition Space

- large, open space
- 2 storeys
- flexible lighting, suspended grid
- small kitchen adjacent / connected to space
- storage space for exhibition material, chairs
- access to outdoor space
- visibility from street / for public

Lecture Hall

- fixed seating
- small stage for panels and lecturers
- large projecting screen

Cafe

- in / off of bookstore

Meeting / Workshop Rooms

- large tables and chairs
- storage / shelving units
- digital tools? makers spaces?
- visibility from street / for public

Library + Bookstore

- stacks
- circulation desk / purchases counter
- sorting room
- reading rooms
- children's area
- seating
- visibility from street / for public

Children's Space

- appropriately scaled furniture
- messy space
- sinks
- storage / shelving units
- opens to children's area in library
- opens to outdoor area
- visible for parent / guardian watch

Main Entrance / Lobby

- news / events displayed
- main counter
- space for small group gathering
- visibility from street / for public

Communications Offices

- open office space with desks, accountant's desk
- small reception
- meeting room
- staff kitchen and washrooms
- display space viewable to centre's visitors

Outdoor Space

- can support outdoor exhibitions
- can support outdoor dinners
- children's space opens into outdoor space

Figure 57. Program profiles aid in developing a clearer idea of the functional requirements for each space.

Bubble Diagram:



Figure 58. The adjacency diagram revisited, this time layered with the event posters created for the centre. This exercise in research-creation effectively allowed the posters to serve as the bubble diagram for the building, as it is designed directly around these events.

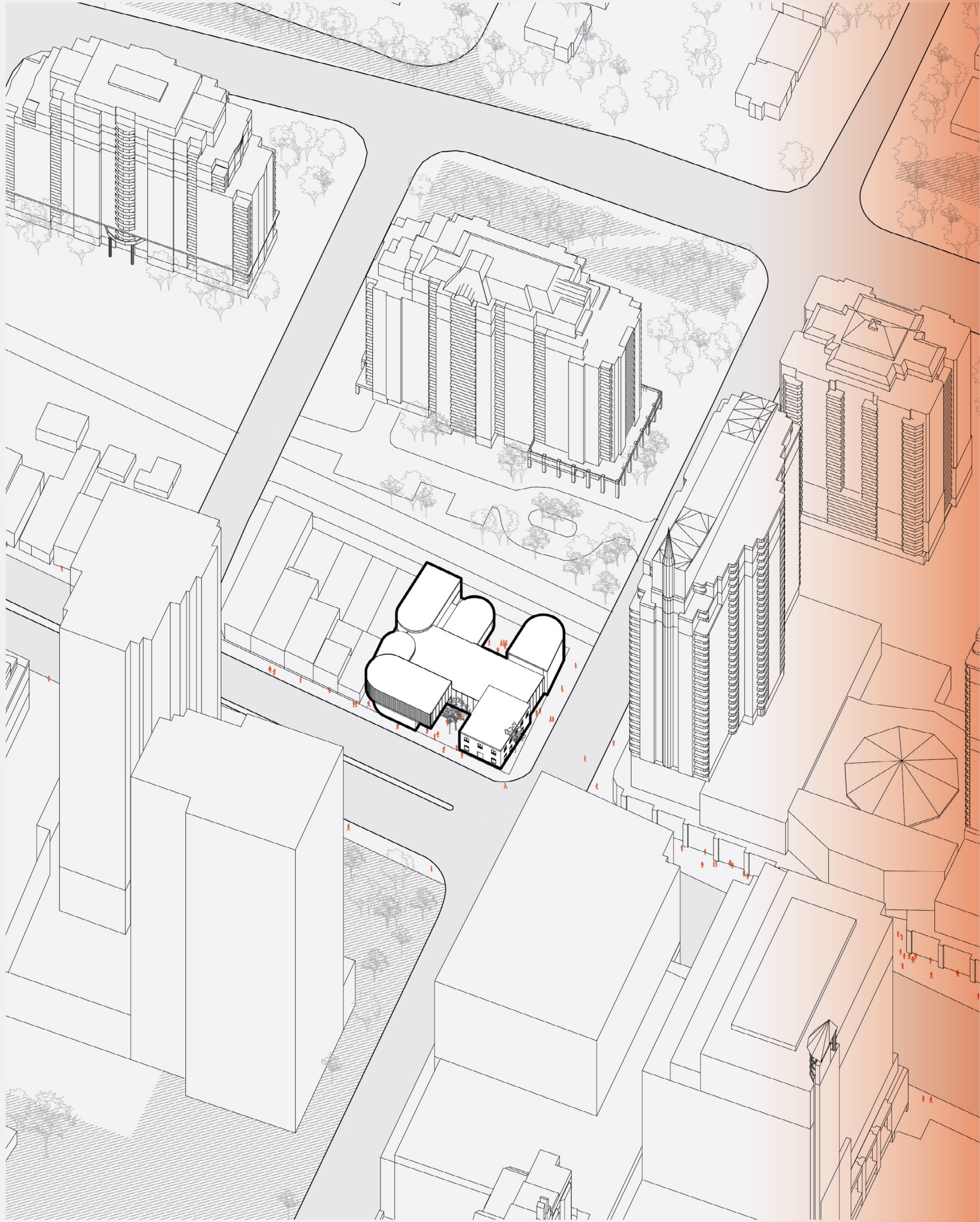


Figure 59. An isometric drawing of the proposed architecture centre design, situated at the important nexus of Yonge Street and Empress Avenue in North York Centre.

The Site

The site chosen within North York Centre is strategic; it is located in the heart of the former city’s “downtown” and sits at the north-east corner of the intersection of Empress Avenue and Yonge Street. The chosen lot is currently a public parking lot with laneway access to the businesses to the north of the block, and a small brick heritage building with prominent street presence at the corner of Yonge and Empress. The heritage building was North York Hydro’s first office, and “the only survivor of an enclave of early 20th-century municipal buildings that existed on Yonge Street near Empress Avenue.”⁸ Its design speaks to the Edwardian Classical Style, and resembled North York’s first municipal building, which used to be at the south-east corner of the intersection.⁹ It was first built as a single-storey building in 1929; a complimentary second floor was added in 1948. The property was favoured as a site for the potential architecture centre because it sits at the nexus of one of the most important intersections in North York Centre: the north-west corner hosts a recent condo development with a small public parkette at street level; the south-west corner is home to the North York Civic Centre, which houses offices, shops, an eatery and the North York Central Library; and Empress Walk, a shopping complex, grocery store and movie theatre, sits at the south-west corner. A short walk away is Mel Lastman square, which is adjacent to the Civic Centre and has public park space, a small amphitheatre, public art, and a pond/skating rink, serving as a lively destination for markets and festivals in the summer. The Gibson House, the preserved historic house of the surveyor David Gibson, is a public museum that informs visitors of Willowdale’s pioneering history and is also only

The Design

a few steps away. The proposed centre compliments these other important civic and recreational buildings in the area by providing a venue for the discussion, debate and appreciation of matters pertaining to the built environment of the community. Access to North York Centre subway station is also located near this nexus, making it a bustling and lively area throughout the year (see Figure 83).

Thesis Object

The building design process began with the deliberation of the language and expression that the building would take on. Preliminary sketches demonstrate the deliberation of this expression as it evolved through experimentation with forms that would best communicate the function and aspiration of the centre (see Figures 69-72). The “U” shape was chosen as the primary parti for two reasons: firstly, it’s curved portion is best suited to non-hierarchical presentation, it provides an exceptional presentation style, and it fosters a sense of inclusive discussion and participation. Secondly, and most importantly, the “U” shape always retains one open face. This has the effect of suggesting that the centre is always open and that you are always invited in. An exercise in research-creation was then conducted with the design of a conceptual object to support the thesis and the parti.

The design of the object not only visually represents the parti of the building, but also, in its use, represents the functions of the building as well. The following are four central elements of the object,

⁸. Director, Policy and Research, City Planning Division, “5151 Yonge Street — Inclusion on Heritage Interview,” *City of Toronto*, March 23, 2009.
⁹. Ibid.



Figure 60. The thesis object is a conceptual representation of the parti for the design of the proposed architecture centre.



Figure 61. The object not only conceptually represents the building parti in its form, but in its multiple functions as well. It can be used as a device for discussion, observation, broadcast, and as a toolkit for communication.

in no particular order: ‘Discussion/Debate/Exchange’, ‘Conceptual Reflection’, ‘Observe/Broadcast’ and ‘Improvised Communication’. ‘Discussion/Debate/Exchange’ employs the ability to wear/inhabit the object, with the curved portion oriented behind the user’s head. Inspired by the work of the late 60’s and early 70’s in wearable architecture, specifically Walter Pichler’s “Portable Living Room” experiments and Hans-Rucker-Co’s Mind “Expander/Flyhead Helmet,” the object turned helmet directs the user’s view directly forwards at another person, who would also be sporting the same unusual headpiece. As opposed to the completely enclosed helmets of early post-modernism that focused the attention on the media or altered the view of reality, the proposed object acts as a device to foster discussion, encourage debate and

facilitate exchange between two particular people: the citizen and the architect. Rid of peripheral visuals and noise, the conversation can occur in earnest between the two wearers. The ‘Conceptual Reflection’ element draws from Hejdukian theory of the “masque”; conceptually, the object represents a character in the city and its distinct curvilinear form represents the primary parti of the building. The form also lends itself to the shape of a magnet, therefore it can be interpreted as an attractor. As well, the cone-shaped extrusion can be seen to represent a megaphone, imparting that the centre is a broadcasting device. ‘Observe/Broadcast’ adds a playful component to the design. One can either use it as a megaphone, by speaking into the cone and projecting through the curve, or the object can be oriented in the opposite

orientation from the ‘Discussion/Debate/Exchange’ function of the helmet to instead obstruct the user’s view, providing a more focused viewpoint. This mutual act of observing and broadcasting is to support the thesis’ aspirations for dialogue that would elevate or generate an architecture and design culture. Finally, ‘Improvised Communication’ makes use of the object as a storage tool: a whiteboard and dry-erase markers are tucked neatly into its core, facilitating the more basic functions of exchange with the opportunity to communicate visually, instead of verbally, through writing and drawing, if the users desire to. These four elements comprise the central theory of the thesis while also grounding the object in multiple layered interpretations. It also aided in opening up the question: what is required to engage someone not necessarily versed in architecture in a conversation about their built environment?

Design Development

With the overall expression or parti for the building guiding the primary design decisions, development of the building’s early form began to take shape. Through simple maquette models at a 1:250 scale, cardstock curves at varying sizes were assembled and re-arranged to test the relationships of these forms against the determined program adjacencies. The hierarchy of spaces from the adjacency exercise dictated which spaces would be privileged for direct street access. Along the Yonge Street lot line, the meeting room and the communication offices would be placed with prominent street presence. The lecture hall will be placed along the Empress Avenue lot line, which receives slightly less pedestrian traffic than Yonge, yet remains highly visible from the adjacent corners of Yonge and Empress. At the corner of the lot lines at Yonge and Empress, the existing heritage building would be retained, housing the

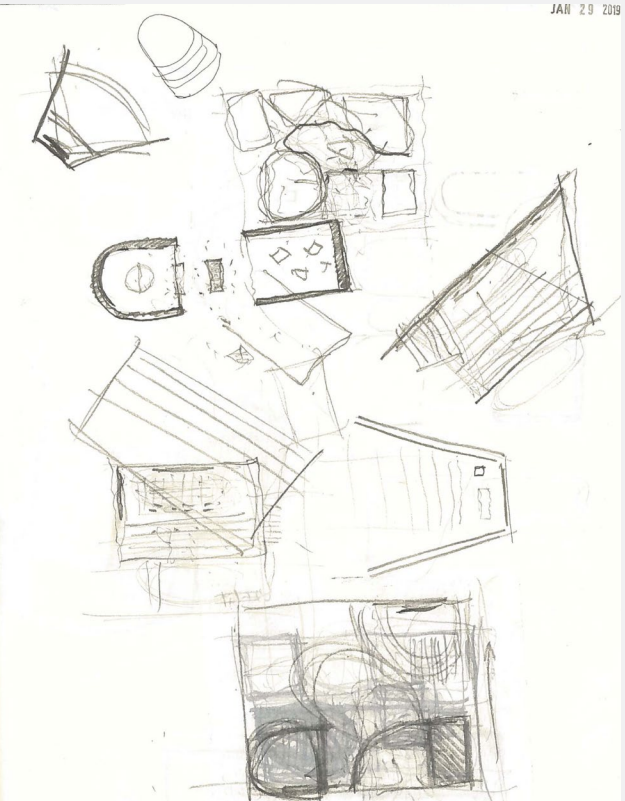


Figure 62. An early sketch shows the deliberation of the overall expression for the building. The composition of volumes follow the earlier adjacency diagram, yet also evolved with further refinement.

coffee shop and bookstore on the first floor, and the archival space on the second floor. Few formal changes would be made to this building, other than the removal of most of the east face to allow it to visually open on to the exhibition space of the centre. This way, the heritage building takes on a similar parti to the “U”-shaped curve—of always being open and inviting. It was early in this process that it was decided the building would feature a central, open exhibition hall with the varying rooms opening onto it. The children’s room faces directly into the space, with the workshop room, which has direct access to the meeting room, also opens into the exhibition hall. An elevator, feature staircase and bridge in this atrium space provides access to the second floor. Throughout the design deliberations, the proportions and directionality of each “U” shaped room morphed according to the programmatic requirements of each space, rendering the reading of the overall building as a composition of



Figure 63. The existing condition of the chosen site for the proposal. The lot is located at the north-east corner of the intersection of Yonge Street and Empress Avenue.



Figure 64. The south-east corner of Yonge and Empress is the site of Empress Walk, a shopping complex and movie theatre, with condominiums above. Access to North York Central Station is located within the building.

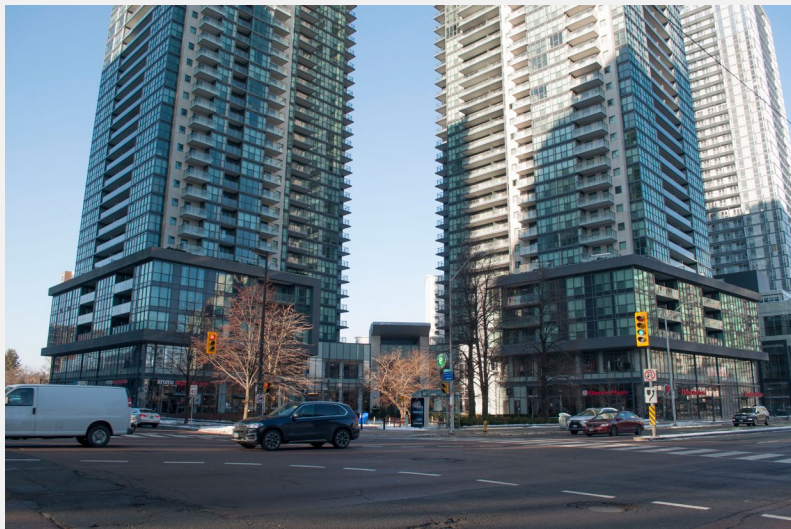


Figure 65. The north-west corner of Yonge and Empress is the site of a recent residential development, Gibson Square, with commercial use on the ground floor and a public parkette.

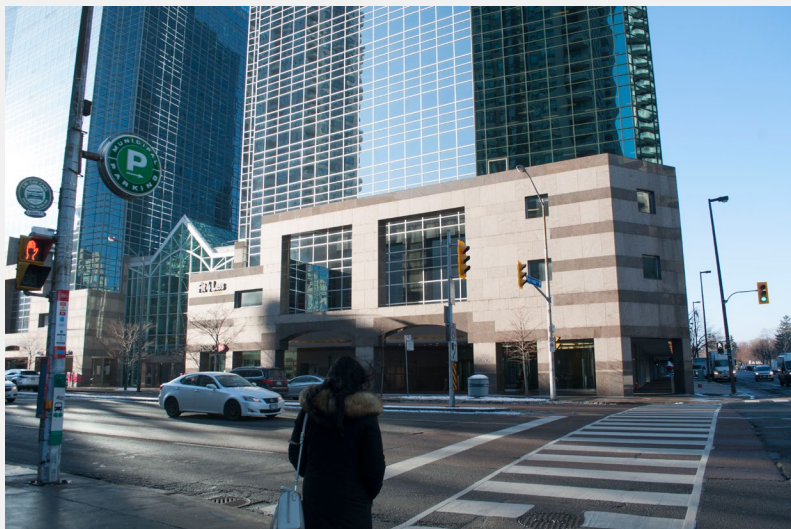


Figure 66. The south-west corner of Yonge and Empress is the site of the North York Civic Centre, which houses government offices, a food court, and the North York Central Library. Access to North York Central Station is located within the building.



Figure 67. The North York Hydro Commission's first office building, built in 1929.



Figure 68. The second storey for the offices was added in 1948.

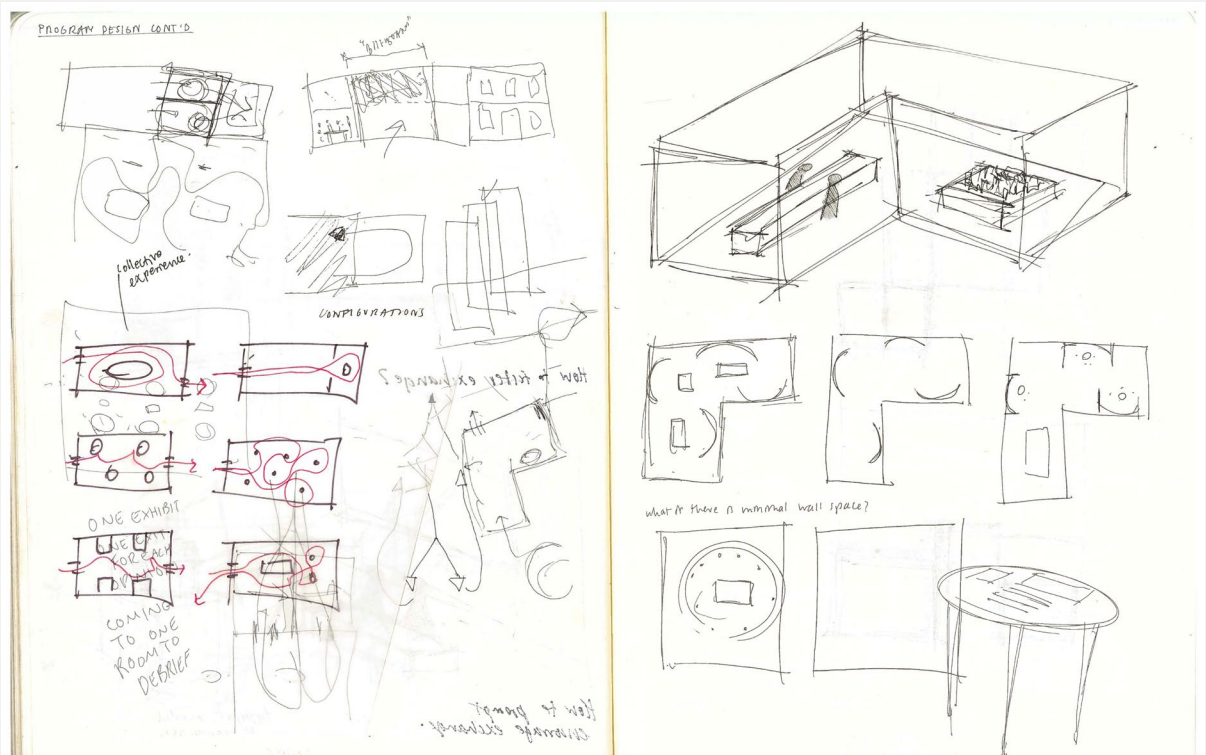


Figure 69. Early sketches depict attempts to understand how best to design the exhibition space.

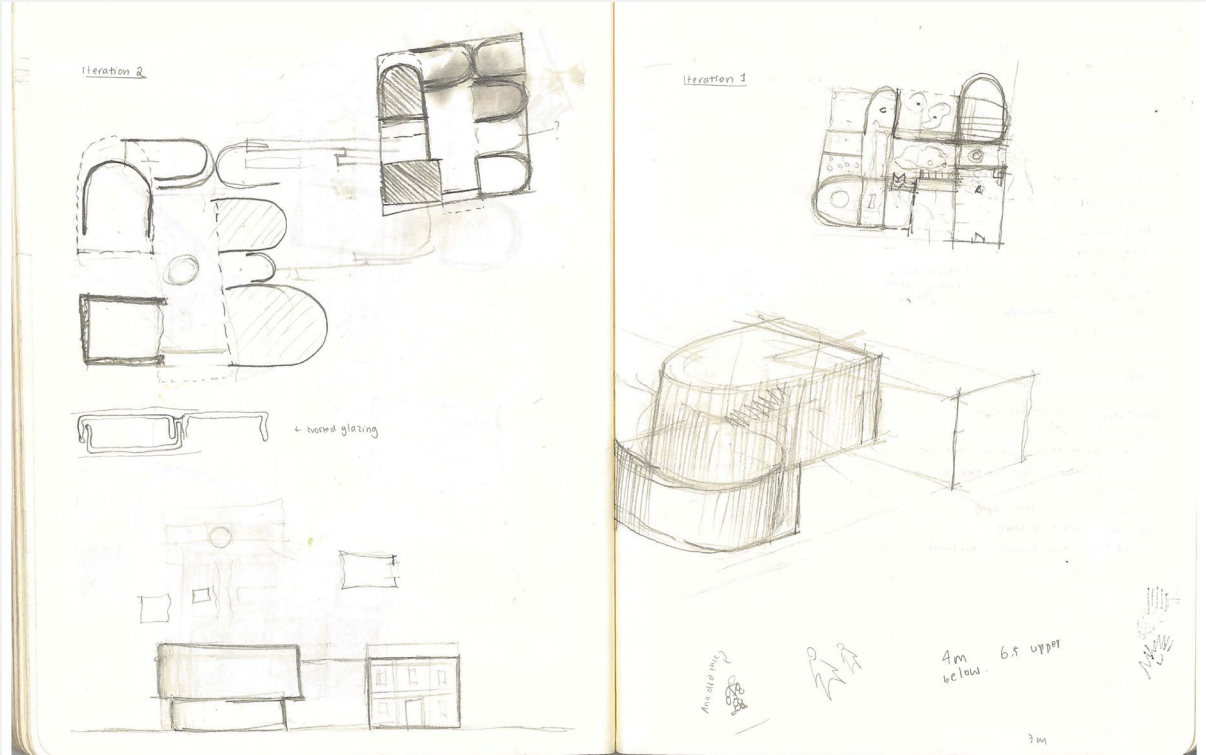


Figure 71. The directionality of the “U” shapes becomes critical when arranging the volumes on the site. The proportions of each “U” change according to the functional requirements for each programmed space.

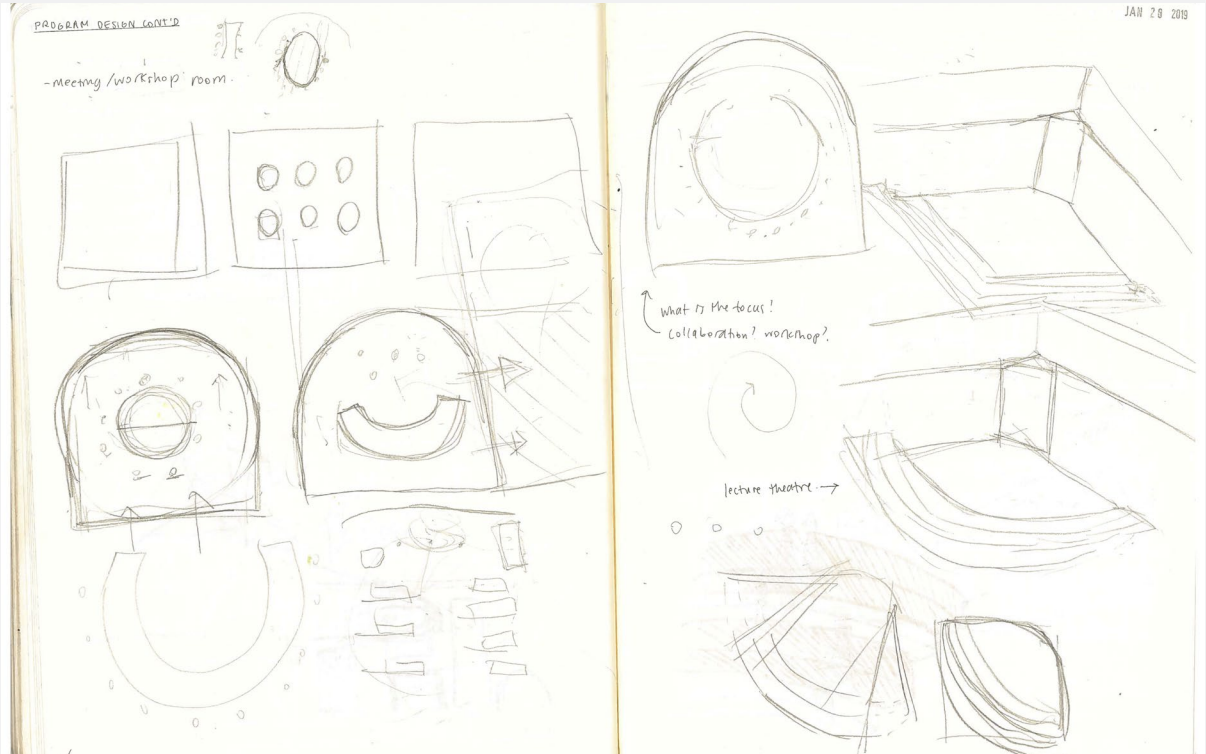


Figure 70. The design of the meeting room was a critical component of the early stages of design, and aided in determining the expression of the building.

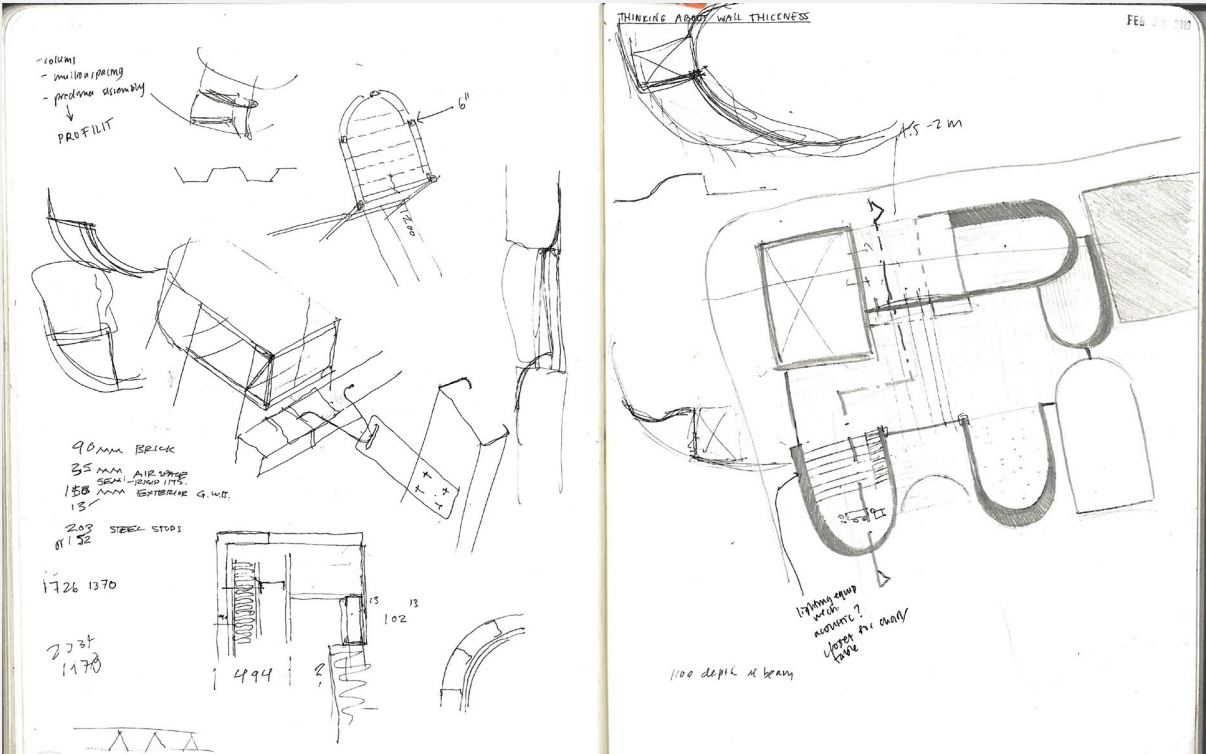


Figure 72. Further details are fleshed out as primary massing has been determined at this point. Namely, the variable thickness walls are designed, as well as the structure for the building.

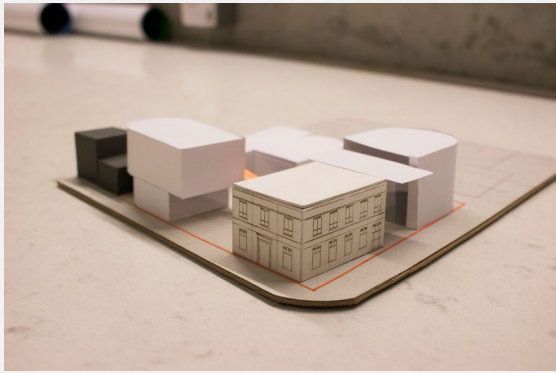
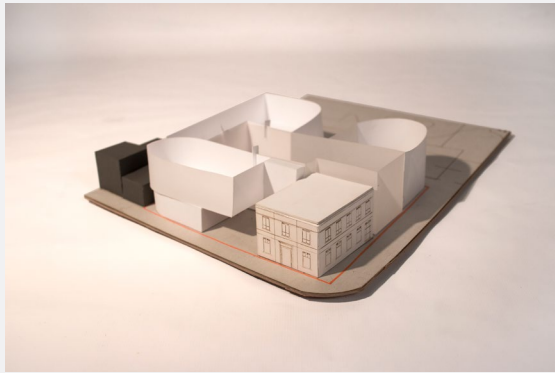
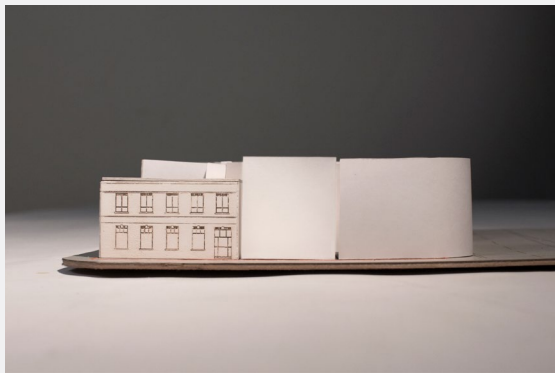
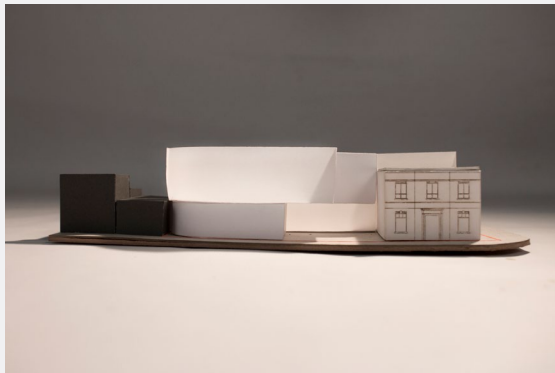


Figure 73. This collage documents the maquette stage of the design process. The use of cardstock allowed for rapid iterations of volume proportions and arrangements on the site.

curvilinear forms in conversation with the street and with each other. Through refinement of the design, variable thicknesses were drafted for the walls: this allowed the programming to be facilitated to a higher degree by providing shelf space, cabinets, room for equipment storage, sinks, display areas, and more, sunken seamlessly into the interior wall face.

In scale, the communications offices and the lecture hall are designed to be the tallest volumes on the property, serving as anchors on their respective corners. These portions rise two meters above the height of the heritage building, but does not overwhelm it or the neighbouring businesses to the north. The upper volumes above the workshop room and back of house space match the height of the heritage building. The fully glazed intermediary space between the curved volumes that serves as the flexible atrium and exhibition space reaches a height just below the heritage building, so as to appear as an indoor court.

In materiality, the curved volumes will be clad in gray brick, to speak to the existing heritage building. The gray brick lends a feeling of refinement while also providing enough texture and colour variation to provide a human scale and community appeal. The communication office volume is mostly Profilit™ channel glass: its translucency shows figures beyond and allows a diffuse glow of light at night. The slate tile of the outdoor court, here untreated and left rough in texture, merges smoothly into the building's atrium space. Inside, the tiles are treated to have a slightly glossy surface. The curvilinear rooms are composed of hardwood flooring and drywall; the gentle curves and warm tone further reinforce the feeling of being welcome. The vibrant orange-painted steel feature staircase and bridge serves as a linearly geometric break among the curves.

Experiencing the Centre

At the prominent nexus of Yonge Street and Empress Avenue, the proposed architecture centre sits modestly at the north-east corner, dwarfed in comparison to highrises at each other corner. Yet, its striking curvilinear volumes set it apart from the two-storey businesses that line Yonge; at night, its glowing upper volume creates an aura of vivacity. Approaching the centre along Yonge, visitors enter the front entrance court, which also provides a moment of respite for those passing by. Within this sheltered court, the two primary volumes of the building open to the viewer, allowing them to see the activity within the meeting room and the communications office. The glazed storefront facade of the atrium provides views into the flexible space, straight through towards the rear courtyard. The vivid orange bridge and geometric feature staircase shoot through the space, and is visible beyond the glazing; people can be seen traversing this bridge between the communication offices and the archival space on the second floor of the heritage building.

Within the courtyard, access into the building is unmistakably marked by the orange vestibule that becomes a sculptural element along with the bridge and stairs. Directly adjacent to this thoroughfare, a linear element of benches separates the outdoor café seating from the busier path of travel. A planted area is dotted with tables and chairs under the shade of a few trees. Towards the heritage building, sliding glass doors allow access into the café and bookstore. Commuters who often pass by this corner on the way to work could use the main entrance of the heritage building to access the café, grabbing a quick coffee before work. Along Empress Avenue, the full height of the lecture hall is separated by another glazed



Figure 74. The west facade of the proposed building, showing the front entrance court that provides access to the main entrance and also into the heritage building.

storefront facade, providing an additional entrance while simultaneously allowing views into the atrium and exhibition space, and into the lecture theatre.

Upon entry from the front court, the visitor might encounter an ongoing exhibition in the open atrium space with temporary installations, information panels, drawings and models. The life within the building unfolds from the curved volumes that open on to the space. The children's space, which can be sectioned off for noise control, hosts youth programming where children can build, be messy and be creative. Pop-ins are carved into the rear curved portion of the room for seating nooks. The curved wall is mirrored on the floor to create a carpeted area for building activities. Glazed doors provide access to the rear courtyard for outdoor youth play. A shed for toys and a sandbox is present in this courtyard as well, which is entirely closed off from the street and has direct views for visiting parents.

The meeting room—one of the critical spaces within the building—has glazed doors that provide access from the atrium. Inside, a very large round table invites citizens, architects, visitors, planners and city officials alike to have a seat at the table. Additional seating is provided for interested parties that do not wish to actively participate. The curved portion of the wall acts a spectacular presentation space. Access into the workshop room provides a seamless transition between spaces, and further spill out from the workshop room into the atrium and exhibition space is made possible by retractable glazed doors.

Upon entering from Empress Avenue, the visitor may discern a lecture occurring in the lecture hall and theatre. The bleacher style seating allows for casual listeners to partake, while loose seating on the floor might appeal to those desiring a closer view. Opposite the lecture hall, the heritage building's east facade is, visually, entirely open to the atrium space.



Figure 75. The view from the front entrance court, looking North on Yonge, showing the view into the meeting room on the ground level. The main entrance is also located within this court, and is signified by a striking orange vestibule that is fit perfectly under the cantilever.

Glazed from the first to the second storey, it provides views and access into the café and bookstore on the ground floor, and views into the archival space above.

To access the second storey, the visitor must traverse the orange bridge: the sculptural staircase shoots above the heads of visitors and gives access to the archival space, the communication offices and the rooftop patio. An elevator adjacent to the public washrooms also provides access to the second level. The archival space provides a home for historic material pertaining to North York, giving back space to the North York Historical Society as well. At the opposite end of the “L” shaped bridge is access to further back of house, mechanical space and washrooms. It also connects the public to the rooftop patio space which has views into the exhibition space and rear courtyard below.

The communication office, another critical

component of the proposed centre, features a large boardroom that functions as a space for staff to host meetings with the public. Both sides of the partition wall can be used as pin-up space. Beyond the wall, the space hosts the desks for the staff of the centre. Near the curved portion of the volume, staff find office material, further meeting space, and can enter the staff lunchroom.

The communication offices and meeting room along with the workshop space form the integral part of the proposed centre and represent the interventions that set it apart from most of its counterparts. Equally important, then, is the design of the communication strategy that the centre employs to attract citizens of North York and bring together multiple publics.

Communication Strategy

Central to the work of any architecture centre is the communication strategy each practices. One of the primary roles of these centres around the globe is to “democratize and demystify” architecture, and this is achieved by making accessible a discipline that is traditionally esoteric in nature.¹⁰ Lynn Osmond, the president of the Chicago Architecture Center, describes this essential function as follows:

Architecture should be the most accessible of all art forms, yet for most Americans it remains an obscure and distant language. When asked what I do—what architecture centers do—I say I am a translator of architecture...at the end of the day, what architecture centers do is an essential function of translation, and it’s no accident we refer to our programs as “interpretive.”¹¹

By drawing from the practices of visual communication agencies and graphic design offices, complex ideas are able to be translated to an audience typically not versed in the language of architecture or design.

This translation becomes critical to the proposed centre given its emphasis on debate, dialogue and exchange. In the public consultation process that already exists within the City of Toronto, although citizens are invited to participate, they are at a disadvantage due to their lack of understanding of the complex processes behind architectural design and production, and urban planning decision making. Therefore, the public meetings are often dreaded by citizens, architects and city officials alike. In an article for MONU Magazine, Issue # 28, Hurducaş describes the public planning process in Romania:

Although the glass hall at the City Hall, where the Commission holds its public meetings, appears to be the place where all voices are heard, it is more of an arena where architects and politicians have forged their skills with every new appearance. The architects/urbanists representing the private clients speak mostly through their drafted plans...One could say that the neighbours are always the more ‘emotional’ ones. They have neither the intellectual weapons of architects, nor the manipulation skills of politicians. The debate is unequal...”¹²

This describes a process similar to what occurs in Toronto’s City Hall and other locations around the city. It is through rigorous communication strategies produced by the centre itself through its graphic design and communication office that it may begin to tackle the evening of the playing field. As soon as citizens feel equipped to take part in the conversation, the work of the proposed architecture centre can begin in earnest.

The success of visual communication and the power of graphic design can be gleaned from the work of the Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) in New York City. It began as a small group of people who questioned the processes of the city, and stemmed from the belief that a successful democracy allowed its citizens to understand, engage, and intervene in these complex functions.¹³ Through “simple, visual and accessible” visualizations, the Center for Urban Pedagogy is able to bring a far wider scope of citizens into a conversation about their city: “CUP projects demystify the urban policy and planning issues that impact our communities, so that more individuals can

Figure 76. The graphic design and communication offices in the building play an integral role in the success of the centre. Pictured here is the Pentagram graphic design office in New York.



10. Lynn Osmond, “The Power of Architecture Centers,” *Oculus*, 69, no. 3 (Fall 2007): 38.
 11. Ibid.
 12. Iulia Hurducaş, “The Fragmented Public as an Emergent Condition of “Weak Urbanism,” *Monu Magazine on Urbanism* 28 (Spring 2018): 28.
 13. Nishat Awan, Tatjana Schneider and Jeremy Till, *Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2011): 115.



Figure 77. Visitors discussing infographics created by the Center for Urban Pedagogy at their 2018 Benefit.

Dharmaraj

better participate in shaping them. We believe that increasing understanding of how these systems work is the first step to better and more diverse community participation.”¹⁴

The Center of Urban Pedagogy has successfully run workshops, lectures, public talks, screenings and exhibitions alongside its print publications, which usually take on the form of zines and other quick types of print media. Of particular interest is the workshop entitled “What is Zoning,” which was a series of workshops held around New York City in 2013, and invited citizens of all demographics to partake in interactive sessions around the topic of zoning. Through a combination of communication material, these zoning workshops allowed participants to better understand how their city was being shaped around them by making complex processes such as density, bulk, land use and rezoning accessible to diverse audiences.

Alongside workshops, the communication strategy employed for exhibitions is of equal importance. Rather than maintaining museological standards for the display of architecture, “projective” and “laboratory” type exhibitions must be explored.¹⁵ Though a comprehensive review of the discourse surrounding the display of architecture is beyond the scope of this thesis, what can be distilled is that new methods of representing architecture through exhibitions are being feverishly tested. The types of exhibitions being held by the “centre type” tend to focus on extremely current issues, use accessible language and visual aids to explain their content, and feature 1:1 installations, interactive elements, and accompanying events that broaden the experience of the exhibition and therefore the ability to widen the amount of people given the opportunity to partake.

An example of this is the exhibition entitled “Too Tall?” held in November 2011 at the since

14. “About CUP,” Center for Urban Pedagogy, accessed April 20, 2019, <http://welcometo-cup.org/About>
15. Amber Baechler, “Exhibiting Architecture - Appropriating the Toronto Harbour-front” March Thesis, Carleton University, 2012; Sergio M. Figueiredo, *The NAi Effect*, (Rotterdam, nai10 publishers: 2016).



Figure 78. The Center for Urban Pedagogy uses graphic design to distill complex concepts and processes in the city into easily understood infographics. They also host workshops to discuss them with diverse audiences.

Part II



Figure 79. An example of an infographic created by the artists working for the Center for Urban Pedagogy. Though various types of topics are covered at the Center, there are a number that focus on issues related to the built environment.

Dharmaraj



shuttered architecture gallery at the Harbourfront Centre in Toronto. The exhibit tackled the extremely topical subject of tall buildings in the City of Toronto, asking three architecture firms in the city to deliberate and reflect on the topic. The exhibition utilized a clever communication strategy, using a hierarchical approach to the display of text information by increasing and decreasing the size of certain statements. Monitors, projections and installations provided interactive elements throughout the space. This type of exhibit excels with wider audiences, especially those not versed in design, because it utilizes a method of curation and communication that allows for rapid understanding of its content.

Beyond the dissemination of information within the centre, the communication strategy also encompasses the methods of advertisement required

to attract new audiences beyond those that the centre is already providing a new home for. Along with a mix of print media such as posters and pamphlets, and digital media such as a website and social media accounts, the publication of a monthly zine becomes fundamental to the discourse within and beyond the centre.

Creating a Feedback Loop

One of the most crucial functions of the graphic design and communication office is the publication of a zine that is directly tied to the conversations being generated at the centre. The communications staff design and assemble the zine, but the content is created entirely by those who wish the contribute, and by the dialogue and discussions being recorded during the events held at the centre.

Figure 80. The exhibition entitled “Too Tall” was held at the Harbourfront Centre’s dedicated architecture gallery in 2011, which has since been closed. It is an example of an exhibition that moves beyond the traditional museological display of architectural concepts.

What was observed from the existing landscape of architecture centres, no matter their identified type, was that there was no platform to then discuss or debate what had been learned at the centre. People often come away without a feeling of connectedness to the building they visited. Instead, by bringing together existing conversations about the built environment in North York, providing a venue for education, discussion and debate, and then drawing synergies between these multiple publics to afterwards broadcast the discourse occurring within the building—that is the most important innovation proposed for the centre.

The zine effectively acts as a bridge between the different members of the community or specific community groups, between the community and the profession, and between the community, profession and city officials. Any interested party could meet with the staff of the centre to propose a certain topic for an upcoming zine issue. It could be related to slated development in the area, about the quality of the urban realm, or in response to any event that took place at the centre. The content being disseminated by the centre is therefore constantly being engaged with in a productive cycle of absorption, dialogue, debate, and re-dissemination. This creates an ever critical feedback loop between multiple groups within North York that wishes to have a say in the production of their built environment, sparking new conversations and elevating the importance and perceived impact of architecture within the community.

Part II



Figure 81. The Center for Urban Pedagogy hosts a variety of event types that compliment the print material they produce. This way, those who partake are able to engage in conversations about the material, which activates the concepts from being merely information for dissemination.

Drawings & 1:100 Model Documentation

[fold-outs]

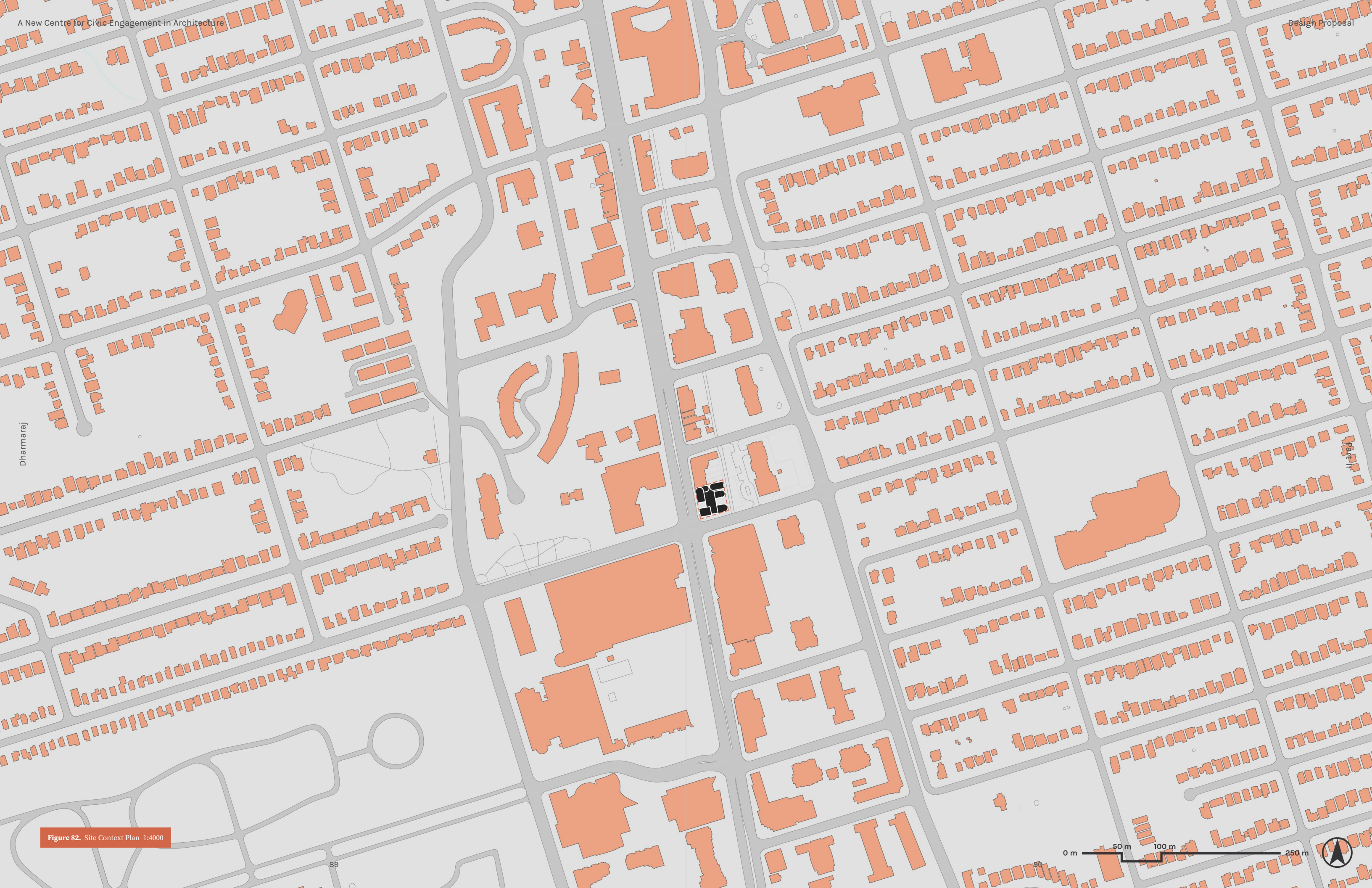


Figure 82. Site Context Plan 1:4000

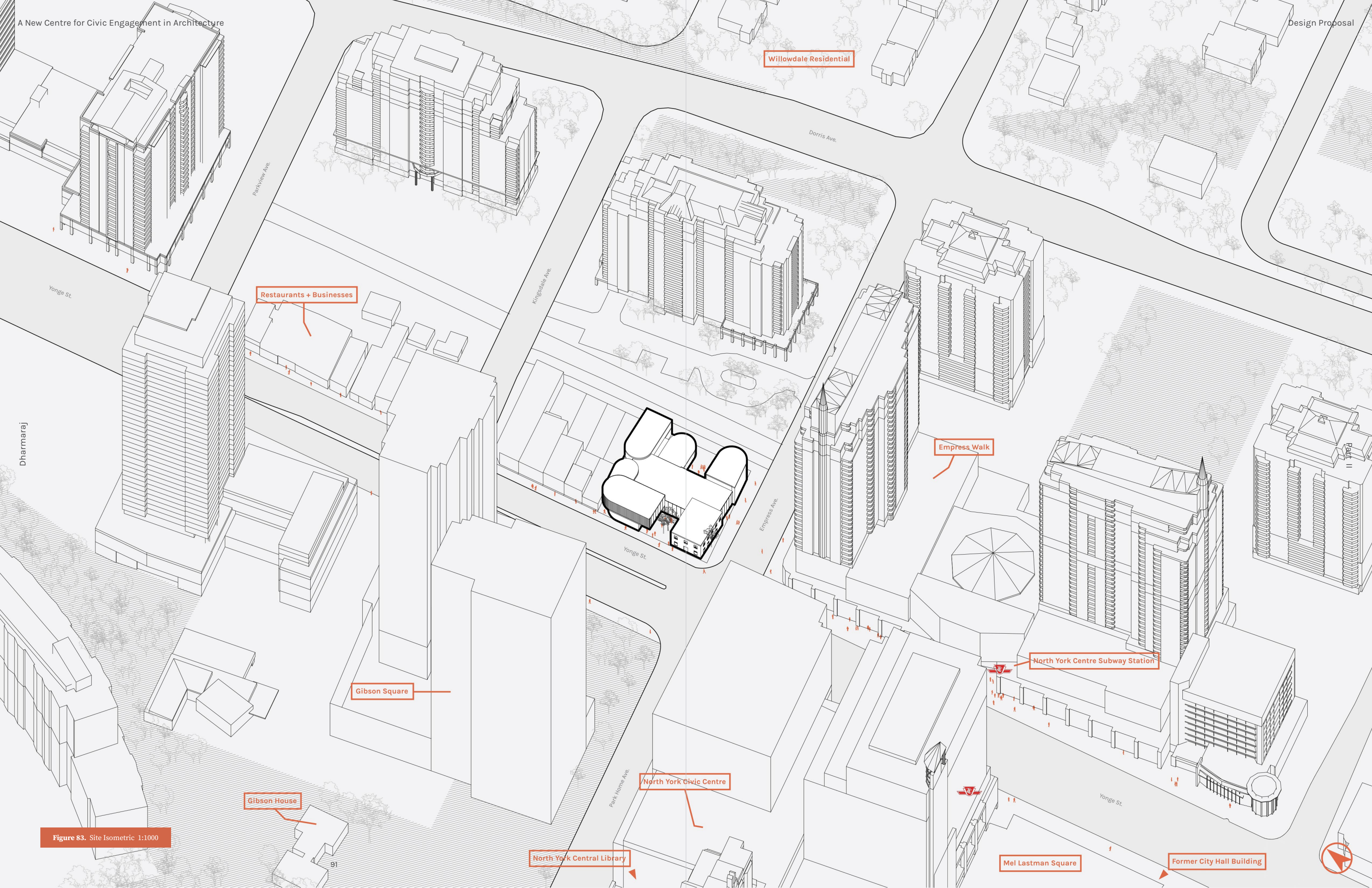


Figure 83. Site Isometric 1:1000

Bharmaraj

Yonge Street

Empress Avenue

93

94

Figure 84. Ground Floor Plan 1:200

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| ① Meeting Room | ⑥ Front Entry Court |
| ② Workshop Room | ⑦ Outdoor Play Area |
| ③ BOH/Storage | ⑧ Cafe + Bookstore |
| ④ Children's Room | ⑨ Lecture Pit |
| ⑤ Exhibition/Atrium | |

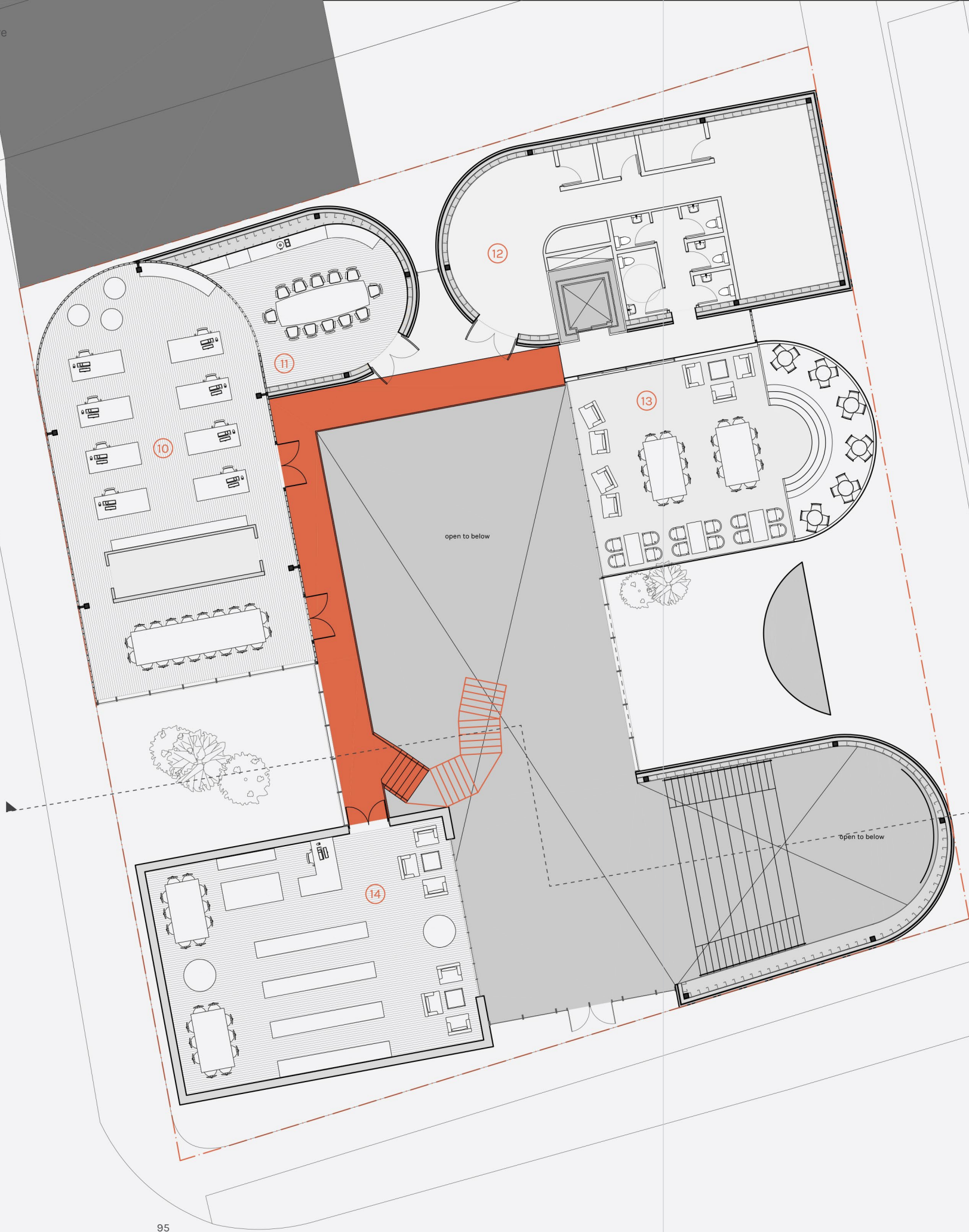


Dharmaraj

Part II

Figure 85. Second Floor Plan 1:200

- 10 Communications Offices
- 11 Staff Lunch Room
- 12 BOH/Kitchenette
- 13 Rooftop Patio
- 14 Local History + Archive Room



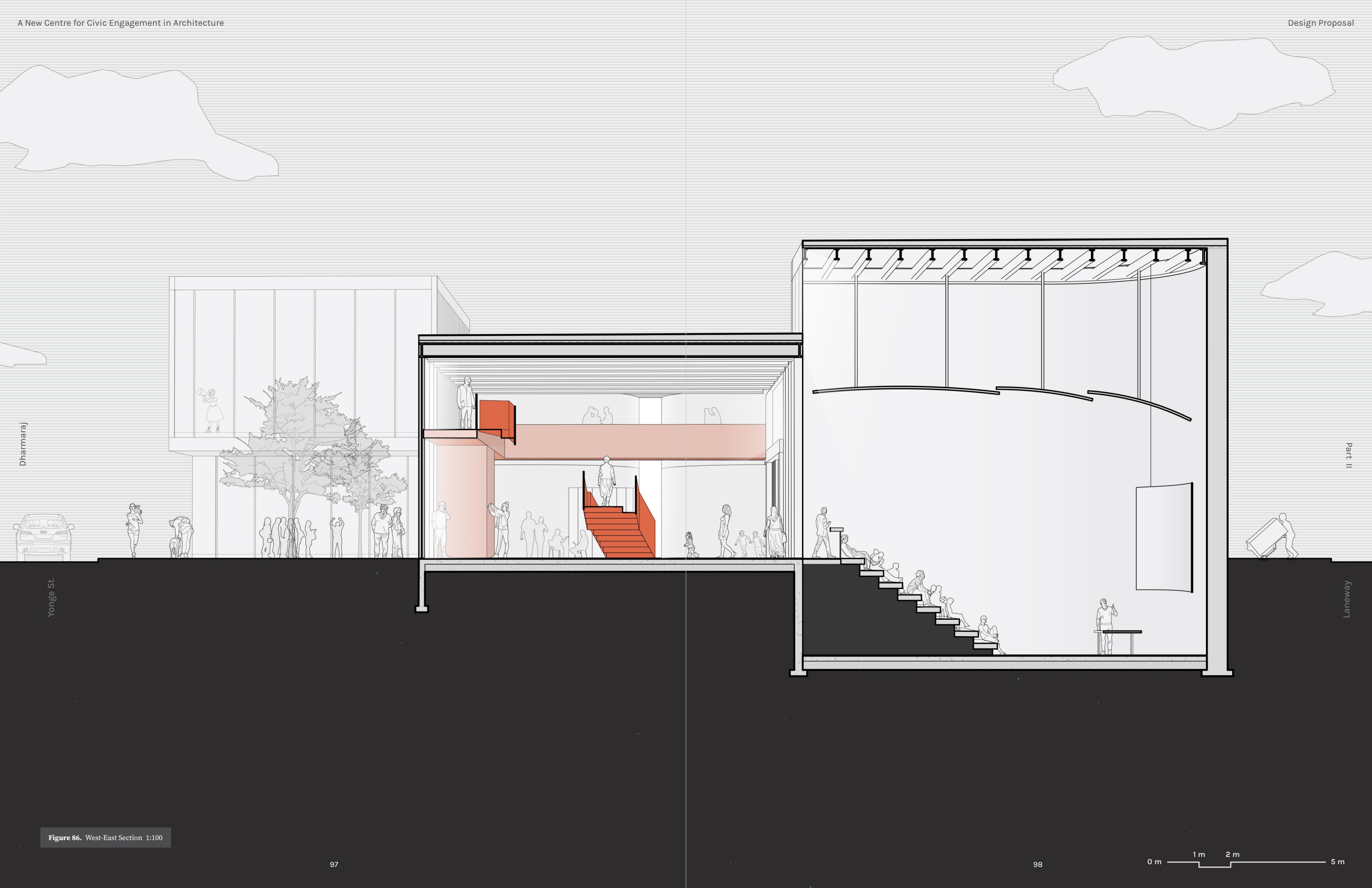


Figure 86. West-East Section 1:100

Dharmaraj

Part II



Figure 87. West Elevation Perspective



Figure 88. Physical 1:100 Model. Overall view of building from the west elevation.



Figure 89. Physical 1:100 Model. West Elevation.



Figure 91. Physical 1:100 Model. West Elevation Close-Up.

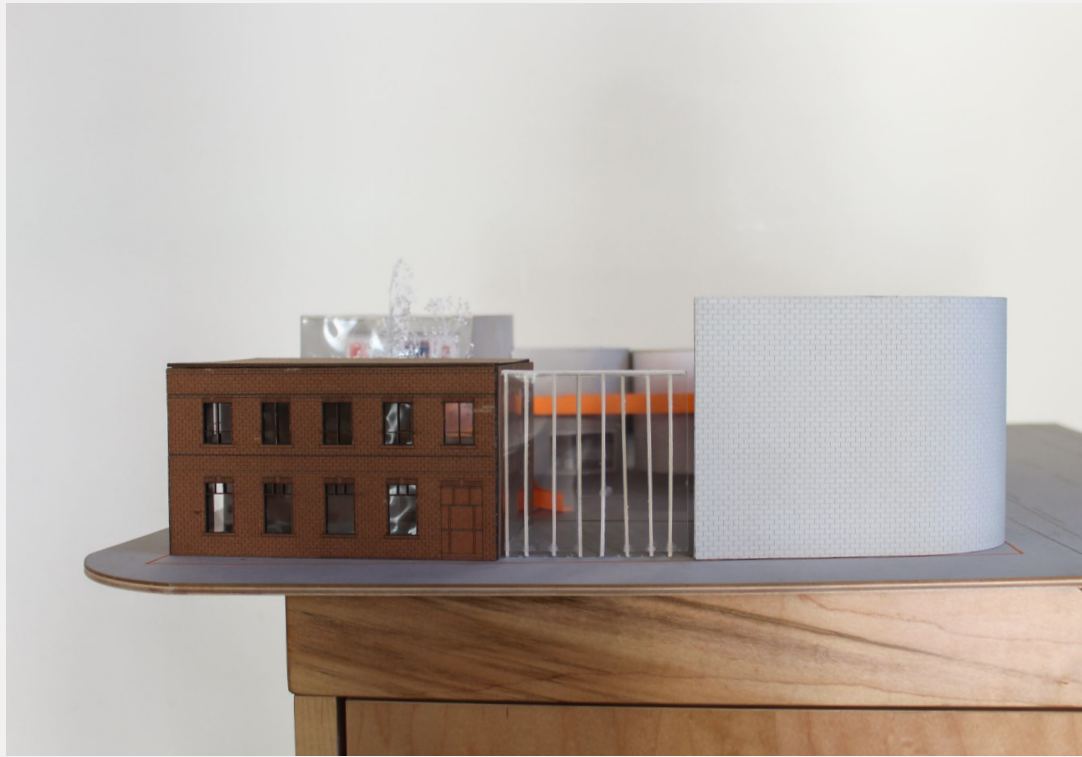


Figure 90. Physical 1:100 Model. South Elevation.

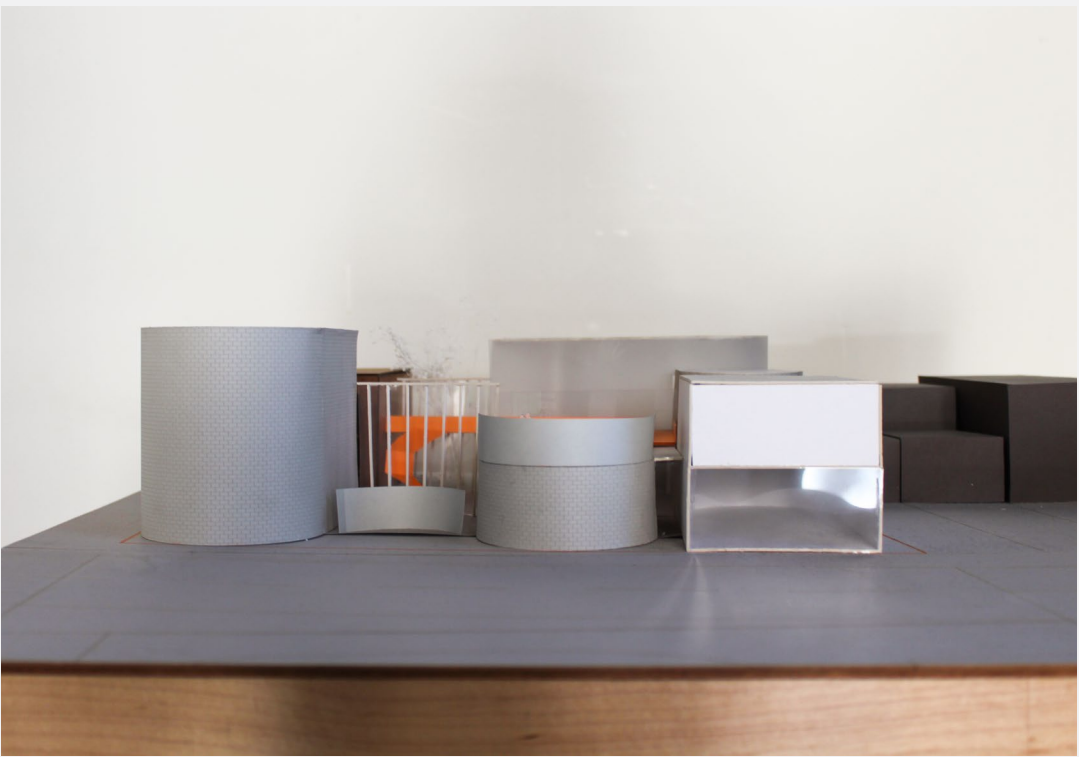


Figure 92. Physical 1:100 Model. East Elevation.

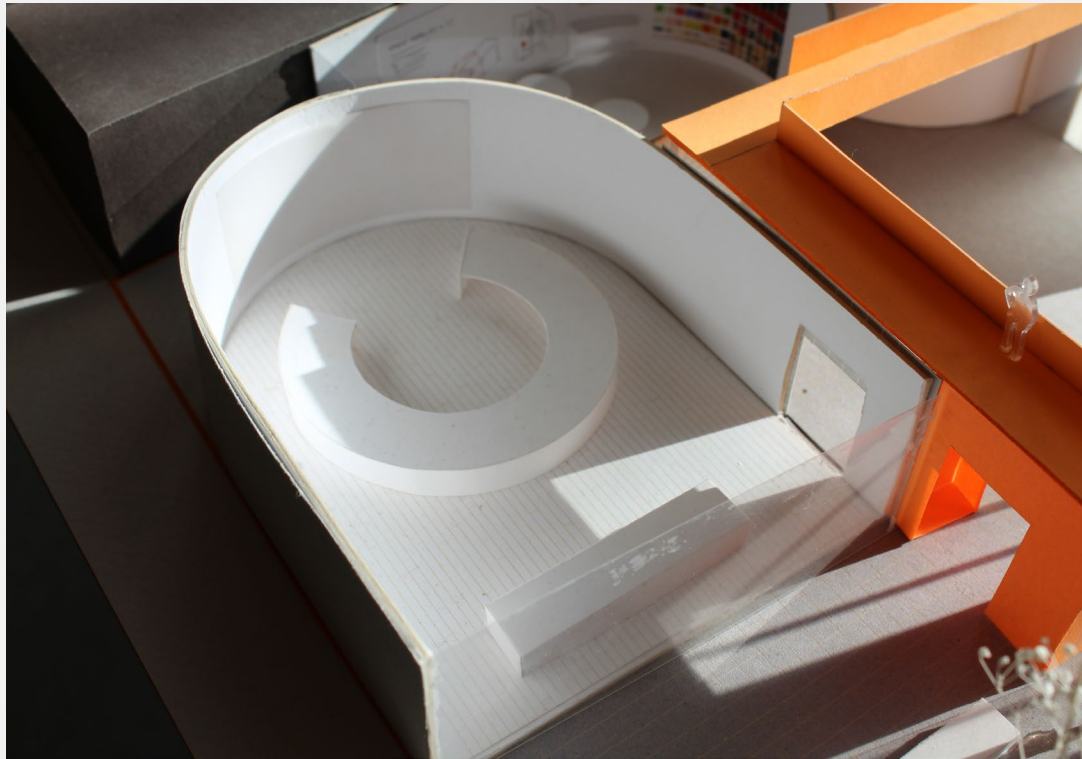


Figure 93. Physical 1:100 Model. Meeting room detail [second level removed].



Figure 95. Physical 1:100 Model. Atrium, children's space and workshop detail [roof plane removed].

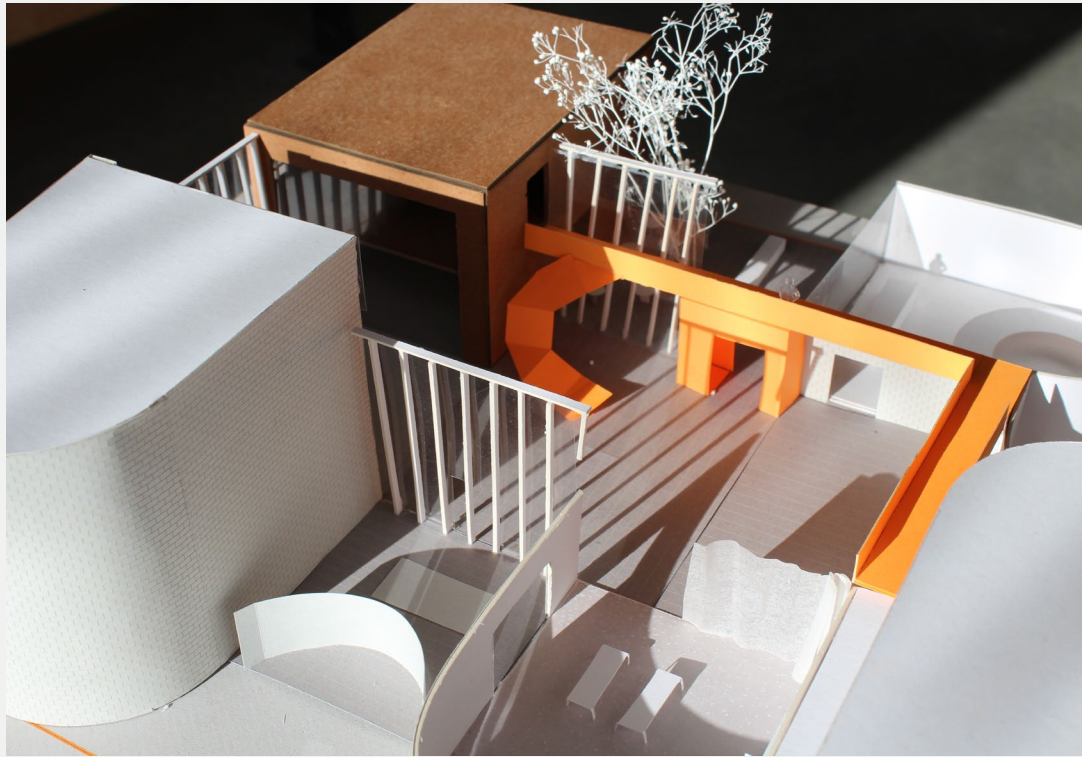


Figure 94. Physical 1:100 Model. Looking towards main entrance.



Figure 96. Physical 1:100 Model. Front entrance courtyard, with view of cafe spillout and connection into heritage building.



Figure 97. Physical 1:100 Model. View into communication office and meeting room through front entrance courtyard.

"What is important is that so many communities have found that the urban center provides a significant way to encourage an ongoing dialogue about the future of the urban world."

"As the world evolves into one of ten-second sound bites, as local newspapers lose readership, and as the population becomes increasingly mobile, demand grows for new and better ways to keep citizens informed about development so they can participate in the public process with knowledge, not just with emotion. The urban center can create a destination where the interested public can become informed players in shaping the future of its communities."

-Diane Filippi and Jim Chappel

¹ Diane Filippi and Jim Chappell, "New Places for an Informed Public," *Urban Land* 67, no. 3 (2008): 83, 86.



Figure 98. The setup of the final thesis defence aimed to test the atmosphere of the proposed meeting room by creating a curved presentation "wall".



Figure 99. An exhibition held at ARCAM on the future of the area surrounding the former prison tower complex, the Bijlmerbajes, in Amsterdam.

Epilogue

On Active Citizenship

In many mid-sized cities in Canada, growth is projected to occur at a significantly rapid pace. Strides must be made within the architectural discipline to engage with citizens in a conversation about the future of their built environment, and for that to occur, an arena and platform must exist to facilitate it: “Efforts to claim public space face an urgent need for dissemination of useful knowledge, effective practices, and information on exemplary works.”¹

The architecture centre as a public and cultural institution has the potential to become an integral component of democracy building and the promotion of active citizenship. By providing an arena for collective action and a network of communication and exchange, the constructive engagement that could be achieved could elicit a built environment that citizens feel connected to, not alienated from. The physical centre is necessary not only as a venue for these discussions to take place but also in its ability to instill civic pride, giving form to citizenship and dialogue.² It also brings citizens, designers, and city officials together to take part in a non-hierarchical conversation.

“How can people-including designers-engage with the roles and responsibilities of citizenship and begin to effect positive social change? To begin with, we claim that there is a need to profoundly rethink citizenship in contemporary society. Active citizenship begins with the recognition that the public realm is a political and physical terrain of struggle that is produced contextually, rationally, and through dialogue;

that is incrementally negotiated over time through democratic participation; and that is manifested in material form.”³

As architects and designers we must promote the engagement of diverse publics within the field of architecture: “Perhaps most importantly, designers can produce and valorize democratic social relations by making thoughtful contributions to the physical spaces where collective experiences occur.”⁴ Through the work of architecture centres, architects and designers are assisted to engage new audiences into discussions around the built environment and citizens become more adept at discussing the production of built space.

Literacy in design should be as essential in agendas for social progress as public education and health. It is through dissemination, dialogue and debate from accessible communication that the architecture centre can produce informed and democratic processes that help shape the city through public input, and aid in generating a culture of design in Canada. It begins with citizens being equipped to participate in the discussion, and the implementation of ideas from the cycle of feedback generated by multiple groups and new audiences now partaking in them.

You are invited to the North York Centre for Architecture to take part in the conversation.

1. Peter Aeschbacher and Michael Rios, “Claiming Public Space: the Case for Proactive, Democratic Design,” in *Expanding Architecture: Design as Activism*, ed. Bryan Bell and Katie Wakeford (New York, NY: Metropolis Books, 2008), 91.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., 84.

4. Ibid., 91.



Figure 100. The North York Centre for Architecture at night.

Bibliography

“About.” CCA. Accessed March 27, 2019. <https://www.cca.qc.ca/en/about>

“About.” *North York Historical Society*. Accessed March 17, 2019, <https://nyhs.ca/about/>

“About CUP.” *Center for Urban Pedagogy*. Accessed April 20, 2019 <http://welcometocup.org/About>

“About the TSA.” *Toronto Society of Architects*. Accessed March 17, 2019. <http://torontosocietyofarchitects.ca/about/>

“Abstract,” *Intersections of Space and Ethos*, ed. Kyriaki Tsoukala, Nikolaos-Ion Terzoglou and Charikleia Pantelidou. London and New York: Routledge, 2017.

Aeschbacher, Peter and Michael Rios. “Claiming Public Space: the Case for Proactive, Democratic Design,” in *Expanding Architecture: Design as Activism*. Ed. Bryan Bell and Katie Wakeford. New York, NY: Metropolis Books, 2008.

Amelar, Sarah. “Ahead of the Curve: ARCAM in Amsterdam.” *Architectural Record* 192, no. 2 (2004).

Awan, Nishat, Tatjana Schneider and Jeremy Till. *Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture Abingdon*, Oxon: Routledge, 2011.

Baechler, Amber. “Exhibiting Architecture - Appropriating the Toronto Harbourfront.” M.Arch Thesis, Carleton University, 2012.

Bingler, Steven and Martin C. Pedersen, “How to Rebuild Architecture.” *The New York Times*. Published December 15 2014. Accessed December 8 2018. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/16/opinion/how-to-rebuild-architecture.html?partner=rssnyt&emc=rss&_r=0.

Chicago Architecture Center Annual Report 2017

“Chief Planner Roundtable.” *City of Toronto*. Accessed March 17, 2019. <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/outreach-engagement/chief-planner-roundtable/>

Compton, Nick. “The BMW Guggenheim Lab stages an urban trends exhibition in New York.” *Wallpaper**. Published October 21, 2013. Accessed March 28, 2019. <https://www.wallpaper.com/architecture/the-bmw-guggenheim-lab-stages-an-urban-trends-exhibition-in-new-york>

Cruz, Teddy. “Foreword: Transcending the Foresight Divide.” *Young Architects* 11 (2010).

“Design Review Panel.” *City of Toronto*. Accessed March 17, 2019. <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/outreach-engagement/design-review-panel/>

Director, Policy and Research, City Planning Division. “5151 Yonge Street — Inclusion on Heritage Interview.” *City of Toronto*. March 23, 2009.

Dyckhoff, Tom. “Introduction,” in *International Architecture Centres*. Ed. Hannah Ford and Bridget Sawyers. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons Ltd., 2003.

Eig, Emily Hotaling and Laura L. Harris. “City as Museum: Building as Artifact: Chicago as Case Study.” *The Journal of Museum Education* 10, no. 3 (1985).

Figueiredo, Sergio M. *The NAI Effect*. Rotterdam: nai010 publishers, 2016.

Frearson, Amy. “BMW Guggenheim Lab by Atelier Bow-Wow.” *Dezeen*. Published August 4, 2011. Accessed March 28, 2019, <https://www.dezeen.com/2011/08/04/bmw-guggenheim-lab-by-atelier-bow-wow/>

Gadanho, Pedro, ed. Uneven Growth: Tactical Urbanisms for Expanding Megacities. *New York: Museum of Modern Art*. 2014.

Gàmez, José L. S. and Susan Rogers. “An Architecture of Change.” In *Expanding Architecture: Design as Activism*, edited by Bryan Bell and Katie Wakeford. New York, NY: Metropolis Books, 2008.

Goodyear, Sarah. “A Pop-up Urban Experiment: The BMW Guggenheim Lab.” *Grist*. Published August 4. 2011. Accessed March 28, 2019. <https://grist.org/cities/2011-08-04-a-pop-up-urban-experiment-the-bmw-guggenheim-lab/>

Hurducaş, Iulia. “The Fragmented Public as an Emergent Condition of “Weak Urbanism.” *Monu Magazine on Urbanism* 28 (Spring 2018).

Jacob, Sam. “Architecture Might Have to Become Less Architectural.” *Dezeen*. Published January 16 2014. Accessed February 16 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.dezeen.com/2014/01/16/opinion-sam-jacob-how-architecture-can-regain-social-significance/>

Jones, Peter Blundell, Doina Petrescu and Jeremy Till. *Architecture and Participation*. Abingdon, Oxon: Spon Press, 2005.

Kloos, Maarten. “Amsterdam Centre for Architecture.” *A + U: Architecture & Urbanism* 451 (2008).

Klooster, Indira van’t. “De digitale ARCAM KAART.” Published September 18, 2006. Accessed March 28, 2019. <https://www.archined.nl/2006/09/de-digitale-arcam-kaart>

Koolhaas, Rem.”Junkspace.” *Obsolescence* 100 (Spring 2002).

Kozlarz, Jay. “Chicago Architecture Center Debuts New Riverfront Location to the Public.” *Curbed Chicago*. Published August 31, 2018. Accessed March 27, 2019. <https://chicago.curbed.com/2018/8/31/17805292/chicago-architecture-center-open-public>

Lambert, Phyllis. “The Architectural Museum: A Founder’s Perspective.” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 58, no, 3 (1999).

Lappin, Sarah A. and Ruth Morrow. “Promoting a Sense of Place: An International Study of Architecture Centres.” *International Journal of Architectural Research* 7, no. 1 (2013).

Luxton, Peter. “Foreword,” in *International Architecture Centres*. Ed. Hannah Ford and Bridget Sawyers. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons Ltd., 2003.

Mau, Bruce and Institute without Borders. “Introduction” in *Massive Change*. London: Phaidon Press Limited, 2004.

“Mission.” *No.9*. Accessed March 17, 2019. <http://www.no9.ca/mission-2/>

Osmond, Lynn. “The Power of Architecture Centers.” *Oculus* 69, no. 3 (Fall 2007).

Shubow, Justin. “Architecture Continues to Implode: More Insiders Admit The Profession Is Failing.” *Forbes*. Published January 6 2015. Accessed December 8 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/justinshubow/2015/01/06/architecture-continues-to-implode-more-insiders-admit-the-profession-is-failing/#e44e9a24378c>

Stephens, Suzanne. “L’architecture parlante.” *Architectural Record* 177, no.9 (1989).

Thompson, Max. “It’s True: People Don’t Know What Architects Do.” *Architects’ Journal*. Published July 19 2012. Accessed December 8 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/home/its-true-people-dont-know-what-architects-do/8633240.article/>

“Top 7 most populated wards in Toronto.” *Toronto.com*. Published September 2, 2014. Accessed March 16, 2019. <https://www.toronto.com/news-story/4818790-top-7-most-populated-wards-in-toronto/>

White, Linda. “North York Centre continues transformation.” *Toronto SUN*. Published September 24, 2018. Accessed March 16, 2019. <https://www.toronto.com/news-story/4818790-top-7-most-populated-wards-in-toronto/>

Winston, Anna. “Architecture has a Serious Problem with Communication says Rem Koolhaas.” *Dezeen*. Published May 24 2016. Retrieved from <https://www.dezeen.com/2016/05/24/rem-koolhaas-architecture-serious-problem-communication-oma-american-institute-architects-aia-convention/>

Zitzlsperger, Ulrike. “Filling the Blanks: Berlin as a Public Showcase.” In *Recasting German Identity: Culture, Politics, and Literature in the Berlin Republic*. Rochester, New York: Camden House, 2002.

